

THE
CREED OF A LAYMAN

APOLOGIA PRO FIDE MEA

BY
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I
APOLOGIA PRO FIDE MEA

INTRODUCTORY

1907

"I never parted with any belief till I had found its complement; nor did I ever look back with antipathy or contempt on the beliefs which I had long outgrown. . . . I have at no time of my life lost faith in a supreme Providence, in an immortal soul, and in spiritual life; but I came to find these much nearer to me on earth than I had imagined, much more real, more vivid, and more practical. Superhuman hopes and ecstasies have slowly taken form in my mind as practical duties and indomitable convictions of a good that is to be."

THESE words were written in 1890 and published in New York in a short paper that I had been requested to send to explain to Americans the growth of my opinions, and I reprinted them in my recent collections of *Memories and Thoughts*, 1906.

I have been continually pressed, in public and in private, to explain the meaning of these words; to give a more detailed account of this gradual unfolding of thought, to show how superhuman hopes can materialise, so to speak, in practical duties. I have no right to refuse these appeals; nor can I honestly screen my natural aversion to enter a sort of

public confessional by the plea that it concerns nobody but myself.

It is known that now for some forty years past I have from time to time written and spoken in public on the burning questions of theology and competing systems of religion; that I have been the outspoken critic of some accepted forms of belief and, I hope I may claim to be, the unshrinking follower of a new belief. For a whole generation I have found myself forced to act as the mouthpiece of this new belief and as the guide of those who have lived and died in it.

All this, as I shall presently show, was thrust on me as a social and personal duty, against my own inclinations and design, by a sense of loyalty to my friends and comrades. I cannot now divest myself of a responsibility which I never sought and for which I felt myself wholly unfit. But as, in public and in private, many persons, in good faith and with a serious purpose, challenge me to state, in plain words, What do I believe? — How did this belief form in my mind? — How does it enable me to live and to prepare for death? — I will try to tell my simple story of conversion and conviction, as humbly and as truthfully as I can find words to utter it, and with as little of the personal colour which is inevitable in so ungrateful a task.

There is nothing, I know, in any way sensational, spasmodic, or original in this plain tale, and in these days it is too likely to be looked on as dull, stale, commonplace, and so forth. How can there be anything at all exciting about so regular and calm a development of thought? But the story of how spiritual rest might be achieved may prove useful to some "perturbed spirit" in our troubled times. On my grave-stone — or rather on my urn — I would have inscribed — *He found peace*. And the device of this little memoir may be — to adapt a famous motto of Alfred de Vigny — "*un idéal de jeunesse réalisé dans l'âge mûr.*"

Many of the most eminent thinkers of the nineteenth century who have based life on non-theological or Agnostic principles — such as Bentham, George Grote, the two Mills, the two Martineaus, Herbert Spencer, Thomas Huxley, J. Tyndall, George H. Lewes, George Eliot — were not bred in the Anglican communion, perhaps never understood and certainly never shared in the spiritual associations of a sacerdotal church. It happens to have been my lot to have been born and bred in such a church, to have been saturated as a student with orthodox theology, to have had till full manhood a heartwhole attachment to the sacerdotal ritual and a reasoned faith in the Christian creeds; and then, by very gradual and regular transitions, to have settled down in middle age into that Positive Religion — wherein I find, as my life closes round me in old age, such perfect peace, such joyful anticipations of a life to come.

All my training, all my sympathies and tastes down to full age, were with that form of worship and of faith which has its traditional root in Oxford. My teachers at school and at college were almost all English clergymen. Nearly all the men with whom I have worked as colleagues in the Positive Propaganda had an orthodox training in the Universities, and many were born and bred in clerical or in official homes. Along with these, most of them now no more, I have passed through all the typical phases of religious thought, from effusive Ritualism to Broad Church, to Latitudinarianism, Unitarianism, Theism, and finally to the Faith in Humanity in which I rest. I am told that I am bound to explain to those whom I have assumed to address, the occasions and the mode in which so radical a set of changes came about.

This I will try to do as frankly as I can, trusting not to offend any genuine belief by the mode of telling. I can

look back over the memories it calls up with entire composure and confidence. There was nothing that I remember to have given me serious pain or dread in the course of my spiritual Pilgrimage. I left the orthodox City which had long been my home without agonies. I fell into no very deep or broad Sloughs of Despond on my way. It was never the City of Destruction to me at any time, though it has proved to too many to be the City of Obstruction. And I have long enjoyed a vision of the Delectable Mountains where the weary are at rest. There is nothing to give me pain in recalling so easy and uneventful a tramp. And I trust that I shall cause no pain in others in the telling my simple tale. It shall be told in as few words as I can find. And I shall not intrude on the reader any other part of my personal experiences and memories except those which describe how I myself have issued from the state when —

*Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,
Chè la diritta via era smarrita.*

BOYHOOD — HOME — SCHOOL

It was my happy lot to have been brought up until my nineteenth year at home, in the house of parents who lavished on myself and my brothers every good influence that family life can give. They were truly and unaffectedly devout to the last day of their long lives, took the deepest interest in their children's education, and impressed on them every act of practical religion. My father was a stanch High Churchman of moderate views, who never omitted to read family prayers, which he did with admirable feeling, was a regular communicant, and followed with keen judgment the religious movements of the time. His partner in business, my own

godfather, gave his time and his fortune to ardent support of the High Church cause. He would constantly send me the manuals and books of devotion of that school. I read them with pleasure and a somewhat guarded assent.

As a small boy I lived in the "thirties" in a lonely country side in Middlesex, then untainted by railways or modern buildings. I can recall the quiet village church, the Sunday Hymns and Catechism, and the simple sermons of our worthy vicar. It was a red-letter day with us when Archbishop Howley visited us, and preached in lawn sleeves and a short wig, and I felt sorry for our good neighbours, the Quakers, who enjoyed no such privilege of hearing the Word of God from consecrated lips.

When we removed to London I was sent to what was then an eminently Church school, that of King's College in Somerset House; and there our course of teaching embraced to an unusual degree, the whole of the Bible, the Church Catechism and Articles, with abundant Scripture "proofs" and texts, such books as Paley's *Evidences*, Pearson *On the Creed*, Ecclesiastical History of the first three centuries, the Testament in Greek, and even the Hebrew grammar and passages from the Psalms in the original.

I can call to mind no time of my boyish life when I was not familiar with the whole of the Bible and Prayer-Book, with the books of Archdeacon Paley, Bishop Wilberforce, Edward Burton, William Adams, and other theologians of the old school. In London I listened with interest to the sermons of our pastor, the Rev. James Shergold Boone, a Christ Church man of remarkable eloquence, and of much philosophic acumen. And I was fascinated by sermons from time to time from Bishop Wilberforce, Bishop Blomfield, Henry Melvill, Frederick Robertson, and most of the famous preachers of the "forties." Till my nineteenth year, I was brought

up in a thoroughly ecclesiastical "atmosphere," which satisfied at the time my sympathies, as well as my mind. If ever a young man was destined to be a Churchman of the "High-and-Dry" type, I think I may claim to have had that early preparation.

All this, of course, was the ordinary experience of any average youth in a respectable family within the Established Church. I mention it only to show that I received in early life all the advantages of religious training, perhaps in somewhat unusual fulness. How did all this act, or react, on my own spiritual growth? I will try to state this as fairly as I can, looking back on it now without regret and without contempt.

I understand that I was considered at home a fairly "good" boy; healthy, docile, and happy, but somewhat unusually sensitive and shy. I must have had at one time a very lively conscience and a turn for introspection. I remember the intense agony I felt as a child when, in a passion with my nurse, I had wished she might "be damned." The dear old thing's horror at my impiety convinced me that I had committed "the sin against the Holy Ghost," as I suppose she told me I had. For three whole days I felt that the earth would open and swallow me up, and I was even afraid that my mother might incur sin, if she kissed so hopeless a miscreant. As days passed by without any catastrophe, my spirits revived, and I fear I began to think that strong language could not be so very wicked as to merit an eternity of torment.

The sound sense of our parents spared us from visions of Hell, of demons, and divine "judgments," and of all the ghastly machinery by which in Calvinistic families children are tortured. Such cruel books as *The Fairchild Family* and the whole literature of devildom and of everlasting fire were kept from us. Apollyon in my pictorial *Pilgrim's*

Progress, "with fire and smoke issuing from his belly," seemed to me as childish as Giant Pope, mumbling in his cave, biting his nails and grinning at Pilgrims. The more I consider it, the more I see how detestable is the crime by which children have supernatural terrors inflicted on them. Our own children have never had a shadow of it cast on their tender souls; and I observe how free they have all been from dread of dark places, of being left alone at night, and from all the bogeydom which breaks the heart of so many young things.

When I went to King's College School in 1844, at the age of twelve, the religious world was in the throes of the Tractarian movement and the impending conversion of leading Anglican priests. There was an earnest Puseyite party in the school itself, into which young as I was I was a good deal thrown. Alfred Bailey and Henry Parry Liddon were both soon to be students of Christ Church and favourite disciples of Dr. Pusey. In the sixth form I sat beside Liddon who, some years my senior, was precisely the same as a schoolboy that he became when priest and canon — with the same pensive earnestness and sweet unworldliness, the same Catholic religiosity and rigid dogmatism. I was afterwards, in my sixteenth year, second Monitor of the school along with Martin H. Irving, only son of Edward Irving, founder of the "Catholic Apostolic Church." My close friend was the late Sir Charles Cookson, also somewhat my senior; who, as a schoolboy, was an ardent ritualist and follower of Pusey, and was himself the son of an eminent clergyman. I was thus thrown before I was fifteen into daily association with several men of great ability, older than myself, whose keenest interests lay in the theological movement and who were Churchmen with a strong ritualist cast.

At the proper age I was "confirmed" by Bishop Blomfield,

and I took the rite very seriously. I went to the Church with a girl cousin who shocked me deeply by thinking much more about her veil than her responses to the Bishop's words. I was duly "prepared" as the rubric requires by our philosophic pastor, Shergold Boone; who, finding that I knew the dates of the early bishops of Rome and the spurious character of the Clementine Homilies, assured me without more ado that I was quite worthy to receive the body and blood of Christ. This accordingly I did with great unction and reverence, having been duly fortified at home with Bishop Wilberforce's *Eucharistica* and other books of the school. I distinctly remember that I believed myself to have received in a literal sense the actual body and blood of the Saviour, and the sense of grace lasted some time; nor did the consciousness of being the vehicle of so stupendous a miracle do me any appreciable harm.

The question however remains, What was the effect of all this training on the youthful spirit? In my case, it certainly implanted in me a strong taste for the Church ritual. My earliest literary attempt was a new Hymn for Easter. I must have been a very small boy when I composed it — verse is always anterior to prose — for I can distinctly remember reciting it when the little nurse-maid put me to bed at night. The girl (our maids were all Churchwomen) thought it "beautiful"; but I believe it was only a variant of the familiar "Alleluia" which had caught my ear. The family attended Church twice on Sunday, but the chanting the psalms and hymns reconciled me to the long confinement in the horrid family pew.

Before I was fifteen I had been three times abroad, and had often attended Mass in the Churches of Rouen, Caen, and Northern France. I have always felt that the English Church service (which I hold to be finer than the Mass)

regarded as a dramatic composition, is one of the most noble products of our literature. When, as a schoolboy, I passed an autumn in Scotland I was chilled to the bone by the Presbyterian form of worship. Later on, when I was once asked by a Monthly Review to name the grandest piece of tragic poetry in our language (Shakespeare being *hors concours*), I said the Burial Service in the Prayer-Book. At Oxford for many years I attended and enjoyed the daily service in the College Chapel, where I naturally came to know the Psalms by heart, and constantly read the Lessons from the eagle.

This taste of mine (I call it no more) has been permanent. I now read the Bible with fresh delight, and still hold the Prayer-Book to contain some of the most magnificent passages in our language; and that, although most of the statements in it are to me now fantastic hypotheses, and a good many of them positively degrading, as are things in the Athanasian Creed, the Marriage Service, and the Communion, as well as others. Even now I take the Evening Service in an Episcopal Cathedral, Catholic or Protestant, to be the most moving form of Art ever devised by man. And, if I were a beneficent millionaire, I would endow no more Universities or Libraries until I had built the grandest and most beautiful Temple on this earth — I think of the type of St. Sophia of Byzantium — or the original Pantheon of Rome — wherein the most exquisite choral service should be chanted at least three times each day; and there, not troubling myself too much about the words, I would sit in the outer porch for hours, and let the music of it flow over my soul. One day — I know full well — the Temples of Humanity will resound to such music — but then with music set to the true words.

This Ritualist training affected my taste rather than my convictions. The rites and formulas which Liddon and his friends held to be indispensable to salvation never seemed to

me to be vital; and when my parents forbade me to go to the Well Street services, lest I should "go over" to Rome, I thought their alarm gratuitous, but their command gave me no concern. Hell had always been to me a matter of picture books, and devilry a rather coarse form of fairy tale. Heaven was a very distant sphere, with no intelligible attraction. My aunt was once explaining to my little cousin how good boys went upwards and bad boys downwards, but he said: "Mamma, I would rather be a little naughty, and stay down here with you!"

I suppose I had an equally precocious liking for the *via media*. I was a "goodish" boy, rather passionate and sharp-tongued. But I certainly prayed earnestly night and morning, and often on all occasions when I seriously wanted anything. I felt myself living in the eyes of God, and I honestly believed that the Almighty would vouchsafe to give me a school prize, or ordain fine weather for a holiday, or even enable me to get a good score in a cricket match, if I only were to besiege the Throne of Mercy with the needful persistence.

This sounds to me now so disgusting that I feel shame in setting it down. But the sole object of this confession of mine is to state the truth. I am convinced that out of every thousand prayers, which ascend to Heaven each minute of time, nine hundred and ninety-nine are of this sort. And in other societies and other ages than our own, we know that prayers have been daily uttered in order to compass immoral and even criminal ends. I prayed certainly that God's grace would enable me to check or cure the evil in me and would purify my heart which I knew to be gross enough. But the real intensity of the prayerful mind was for some personal advantage or enjoyment, sometimes of the most trivial sort.

There is nothing unusual in this. It was the case of a

fairly good, conscientious, average boy. It was not till manhood that I fully saw all the folly, meanness, selfishness of this practice. When we reflect what Christians conceive their Maker to be — the Ineffable Majesty which has created the Infinite Universe — when we think that each of us is but an infinitesimal mite, on one of the minor satellites that whirl round one of the smaller of the thirty millions of Suns — when we hear this mite asking the Almighty to suspend in its favour the laws of life and death; of sunshine and rain; it may be, to help it draw a lucky number in the ballot; to win a prize in a lottery; or to ruin a rival — the moral basis of ordinary Prayer becomes too horrible, too grotesque to be endured.

It is in vain to talk about the spiritual efficacy of Prayer in the exalted sense. The vast percentage of actual prayers are almost as childish — some of them as odious — as the prayers howled forth by African savages or Asiatic fanatics. It is my own experience that in ordinary cases and for common minds the habit of Prayer as now taught and practised degenerates into gross self-seeking — far from moral, and usually trivial in a social point of view. How much of private prayer in the vulgar practice of average mankind seeks for any good thing for others, at least outside the immediate circle of our kith and kin? How much is for spiritual blessing apart from material advantage? Even the secular Litany of Christendom — magnificent as a Hymn — runs first into mere Magic, and then into a sort of battle-cry. I do not doubt that the conventional prayer of to-day passes far away from even the modest standard of the Lord's Prayer, and tends to lower the moral nature by stimulating the instincts of Self.

Men, women, and children have been taught that a Being, who controls the elements, watches the fall of a sparrow, and numbers every hair on the head of myriads, can be induced to

grant a suppliant's wish by entreaties, praises, and genuflexions. It is inevitable that, in the gross nature of the ignorant and the young, their prayers will naturally turn to their immediate pressing wants, and these will usually be material and personal. Once place the ordinary mortal — that infinitesimal mite on an infinitesimally small mote in the unlimited Universe — in presence of an Infinite Magician to whom all things are possible, and it follows that the poor, harassed, hungry, sick, crushed worm will ask for what it most craves for, will think first and mainly of itself — as if it were for the moment the being most precious to the Author of the Universe.

The religious teaching that we had at school as at college, though elaborate and incessant, dealt with the Pentateuch and the Testament exactly as it dealt with Herodotus and Plato. We knew the dates of all the kings of Israel, the geography of Judea, the benevolent and the destructive miracles. We could patter off all the obsolete notes of D'Oyly and Mant; we repeated the 39 Articles by heart, and were ready with the stock "proofs" from Scripture. We wrote essays about Paley's savage finding a watch, and we knew all about Supralapsarians, and which of Tertullian's works were written before, and which after, his lapse into the Montanist heresy.

But all this did not tend to edification or the holy life. Even schoolboys feel the antithesis between the Calvinist articles and the Catholic ritual. I always found the Scripture "proofs" for the Trinity to be somewhat too meagre and strained to establish so abysmal a dogma of metaphysic. But we were not a disputatious set at school; and in the "forties" neither Colenso nor Jowett had written anything but Arithmetic and Greek. I always thought the 17th Article on Predestination somewhat self-contradictory, as indeed were

the Articles and even the Prayer-Book on the Sacraments. But nothing urged us to press the matter. And as our clerical teachers were willing to leave these questions in the ambiguous double-sense wherein the Church had designedly left them, we were equally ready so to leave them, and to pass on to Æschylus and Thucydides, in which no ambiguities were allowed.

OXFORD

At the age of eighteen I went to Oxford as scholar of Wadham, which was then the eminently Protestant College, the Warden, Dr. Symons, being one of the leaders of the ultra-evangelical party, with a wife from a Quaker family. My immediate companions were, a son of the late Bishop Baring of Durham, the sons of two eminent Simeonite divines, one of them the famous author of the *119th Psalm*, and others, most of whom have since become beneficed priests. There was a small group of pronounced Puseyites, amongst whom I was counted; at least I was one of seven black sheep who were never invited to the Mission and Prayer meetings occasionally held at the Warden's lodgings.

Of the students about two-thirds at least had come from Anglican parsonages (in those days of Tests all members of the University were compelled to sign the 39 Articles at admission) — and about two-thirds were destined for Holy Orders. Nearly all the tutors were priests; the Sub-Warden lectured on the New Testament in the original; the Warden lectured on the "Articles of Religion"; we were compelled to attend the Chapel service every day and twice on Sunday; and to hear the University sermon, of which we had to bring up abstracts and summaries.

Here were all the elements of theological inquiry and debate.

The College contained men of all shades of belief within the Anglican pale and one or two avowed sceptics who knew more divinity and had greater dialectic ability than the rest of us. We often spent most of Sunday, until the early hours of Monday morning, discussing the Sermon of the day, combating each other's "heresies" and "superstitions," or in ridiculing the Warden's stale sophisms about the "argument from design."

No method could be devised more certain to breed a confused chaos of religious thought than the University sermons — at least as they existed from about 1850 to 1870, when I constantly heard them. Every Master of Arts in orders had his turn, and he naturally took the occasion to expound his cherished dogma. Sunday after Sunday, year after year, the official pulpit rang with some different point of view, from the extreme Ritualist to the ultra Calvinist. The select preachers and the Bampton Lecturers often broached a more philosophic scheme of thought. The thoughtful student who is obliged to summarise these diatribes, has every phase of theological thought forced upon his attention. The creed — "necessary if we are to be saved" — of one Sunday becomes the heresy of the next. Priests who had all but "gone over with Newman" followed priests who had driven him forth with Protestant anathemas. One set of these sermons has been incorporated into the argument of Herbert Spencer's Agnosticism. Another set has been the base of the somewhat intermittent flashlight of the *Lux Mundi*.

I have myself heard in the University pulpit Dean Mansel's agnostic dialectics, Canon Liddon's Catholic homilies on the Divinity of Jesus, H. Bristow Wilson's Lectures on the universal reign of Law in place of Will, Bishop Gore, and the late Master of Balliol, Dr. Pusey himself, and Richard Congreve, afterwards founder in England of the Positivist Church

of Humanity. I have seen the benches of the undergraduates in the gallery quivering with the emotion caused by some perfervid Catholic exhortation. I have seen the same benches shake with irrepressible delight at some brilliant logical dilemma. How can the minds of keen young students retain their calm or any fixity of thought, when week by week they are swept by "every wind of doctrine" — winds that blow in turn from each quarter of the theological compass, which they "box" with incessant revolutions?

At school I had been allowed my own way, and I read quite as much of English literature as of Greek or Latin. At Oxford my general reading was mainly in theology, philosophy, and criticism. When I went from home my mother gave me a copy of the Bible, which I got from the old John Henry Parker, the publisher at Oxford of the *Anglo-Catholic Theology*. He served me himself in the shop in Broad Street and brought out the fine edition 8vo, of 1847, "in small pica." with the *Apocrypha*, References and all — a beautiful print. He seemed to think it odd that an undergraduate should want so large and costly a book, which might serve in a Church lectern. But I carried it to my rooms, and continually read it. It has my mother's autograph and the names of my wife and my children with the dates of their birth. I have always had it at my side now for fifty-eight years, and I have no book which I value more or open with greater zest.

Besides constant reading of the Bible (to which I owe what knowledge I have of pure English), I read Dante and Milton — the latter in Pickering's edition of 1851, in 8 volumes 8vo, with the original spelling, which has ruined my orthography for life — John Henry Newman's *Parish Sermons* (1836-1842), a masterly and unforgettable book, Frederick Denison Maurice's *Sermons* and *Theological Essays*, Sir James Stephen's *Ecclesiastical Biographies*, and

Dean Milman's *History of Christianity and of the Jews*. Bishop Butler's *Analogy and Sermons* were amongst the books "read for the schools," as were the Bible history, the Greek Testament, and *Plato's Dialogues*. *Manfred, Cain, The Revolt of Islam, In Memoriam, The Christian Year*, Coleridge's various *Essays, Sartor Resartus*, the religious novels and poems of Newman and of Kingsley, were the subject of frequent discussions at our "Sunday tea-fights," and were not only read but thought over and criticised. Next to the Bible and Milton, I think the writings which first enthralled me were those of Bishop Butler, Cardinal Newman, Frederick Robertson, Frederick D. Maurice, and Tennyson.

Very slowly, gradually, and peaceably, under this continual ebb and flow of theological discussions, my school taste for ritualism and my calm acceptance of orthodox doctrine melted away into a sense of suspended judgment and anxious thirst for wider knowledge. I now began to read the *Westminster Review*, between 1850 and 1860 at the acme of its brilliancy and influence. John Henry Newman led me on to his brother Francis, whose beautiful nature and subtle intelligence I now began to value. His *Phases of Faith, The Soul, The Hebrew Monarchy*, deeply impressed me. I was not prepared either to accept all this heterodoxy, nor yet to reject it; and I patiently waited till an answer could be found. I read Theodore Parker's *American Discourses*; and, if I was not converted to "Universal Salvation," certainly he and Maurice and Francis Newman relieved my youthful mind of any fear of an eternity of Hell.

As we began to read for the Final Schools, our text-books became Grote's *Greece*, Mill's *Logic*, Aristotle's *Ethic*, Plato's *Dialogues*, and the history of philosophy. Mill, G. H. Lewes, George Eliot, Littré introduced me to Comte. The *Westminster Review* with articles on Strauss' *Life of Jesus*,

Renan and Bauer on the Scriptures, Humboldt's *Cosmos*, and constant Essays by Herbert Spencer, W. Call, W. R. Greg, Mill, the two Lewes and Francis Newman, opened to us the whole of the critical study of the Scriptures and the Creeds as far as it had gone down to the appearance of Spencer's *Synthetic Philosophy* and C. Darwin's *Origin of Species*.

I was at Oxford altogether as student and resident fellow and tutor, some six years, and during the whole of that time my opinions on the crucial problems of religion and philosophy had been gradually and quietly widening and forming. The criticisms on the inspiration of Scripture and the credibility of the Creeds made by W. R. Greg, F. Newman, Strauss and his translator George Eliot, had by this time completely shaken my hold on the conventional orthodoxy. But I moved on very cautiously by slow steps. And I remember telling a sceptical comrade that my religious views were in a state of gestation — which might take nine months or nine years to bring to birth; and in the meantime no one could say whether it would prove to be a boy or a girl. In the event, it actually took twice nine years and proved to be a man of middle age with formed and consistent ideas.

What moved me far more than the critical assaults of Strauss, or of Francis Newman — a man of a learning and an intellect far superior to that of the Cardinal, but one who had no clerical *claque* to belaud him — what shook my orthodoxy, was the way in which devout and noble spirits such as that of F. Robertson, of F. D. Maurice, of Francis Newman, Theodore Parker, together with followers of Dr. Arnold, of Coleridge, and the poets Tennyson and Browning, struck off the fetters of what Carlyle called "the rags of Houndsditch." Maurice, Coleridge, Carlyle, and F. Newman, in different ways and often without intending it, would fill me with horror and shame at many passages of Scripture and many dogmas of the

Church which I felt to be profoundly repugnant to sound morality and even to human nature. I never can forget poor dear old Maurice stammering through the story of Dinah, when that horrible chapter of Genesis came to be read in its turn.

PHILOSOPHY — SCIENCE

When I came up to London to study law I was fond of hearing the Choir at Lincoln's Inn and F. D. Maurice preach. His sermons demolished what remains of orthodoxy I had. With much force and real pathos, he would enlarge on the weak side, especially on the moral blots, of the Scripture record or of the Church Creed. Having completely gained our assent, he would wind up with some conventional and effusive peroration, which came to this — that preposterous as was the doctrine and immoral the ordinance from a purely human point of view, we ought to accept it as a sublime sort of *auto da fé*; we ought to hug our fetters, and revel in our darkness as faithful Christians within the pale of the true Church. How many of us recoiled from this abject *Credo quia impossibile* — *quia inhumanum* — which seemed to be the final word of this truly devout, high-minded, and generous priest!

At Oxford our teachers occupied themselves with divinity entirely in its literary side, as a matter for examination, not as religious edification. The tutor of whom I saw most and whom I greatly respected was Richard Congreve, who at that time was still in priest's orders, but had ceased to be Christian, though he was hardly yet Positivist. Comte's religious system in fact was still in the making and was practically unknown in England. Congreve impressed us by his masculine grasp of history and morals, by his strong character

and high social ideals. He never mentioned Comte or his writings; nor did he ever criticise the Christian faith. He did not avow or preach the religion of Humanity until years after he had renounced his orders, had resigned all his offices, and had quitted Oxford.

By the time I had reached full manhood I had entirely assimilated Mill's *Logic*, Herbert Spencer's earlier *Essays*, Lewes' *History of Philosophy*, and I was a convinced disciple of the Philosophy of Experience as against all forms of the Intuitional schools. In a College essay, as an undergraduate, I had boldly declared that the future of modern thought could rest only on some type of the Positive Philosophy. I now read Comte in Harriet Martineau's translation, in the intelligent summary of Littré, and in the perfunctory sketch of G. H. Lewes. I carefully studied and was profoundly impressed by Comte's view of general history and by his original scheme of a new science of society. I entirely accepted both, but did not apply them to religion or the organisation of society. Of all that I knew nothing; and in fact it was at that date neither completed nor published.

I now sought and obtained an interview with Auguste Comte in Paris, who gave me one of his mornings whilst the third volume of his *Polity* was in the press. He received me with a simple dignity which at once charmed me; inquired of my knowledge and what more I wished to learn of his system; and then answered each point with perfect freedom and brilliancy of exposition. I told him that I had been bred up a believer in God, and so remained; that I was impressed by his scheme of philosophy and especially by the evolution of history so far as I knew it in the previous work (the *Philosophie*). He said that many of his followers, especially women, clung to the theological beliefs in which

they had been brought up; that he made no attempt to dispel these, as all his teaching was *positive* and not *negative*; that as my education at Oxford had left the physical sciences aside, I was not in a fit state of intellectual preparation to decide for myself these ultimate problems.

I felt the truth of this, and I resolved to remedy the defects of an academic education by devoting myself to gain some knowledge of natural science, at least enough to understand the logic and dominant results of the four great physical sciences, especially of biology. All through life this profound truth came back to me;—that it is preposterous to attempt to deal with the mysteries of Man's existence and the relation of Man to the Author and Ruler of the Universe, and still more so to debate the meaning of the Soul and the effect of Death, whilst the thinker, however acute, has been trained in nothing but languages, history, and metaphysics.

This interview with Comte did not make me a Positivist; I was not yet twenty-three; his *Politique* was unfinished, and I did not yet know one of his books in the original. But the extraordinary clearness and organic order of his conceptions deeply impressed me. His power of oral exposition was consummate, for his spoken word was as brilliant, epigrammatic, and luminous as his books are close, abstract, and difficult. On each point that I begged him to explain he spoke for ten or twenty minutes with a rapid and lucid analysis, paused, and passed to the next. It made me think of the way in which Plato taught in the Academy, for I have never heard before or since any teaching so instructive. The memory of these curt decisive solutions of difficulties has enabled me to pierce the closely-knit reasoning of his written method.

Oxford made me a confirmed disciple of the Philosophy of Experience and the Relativity of Knowledge, in the sense

of Mill's *Logic* and Spencer's *First Principles*. This conviction has now during fifty years sunk deeper each year into my mind. It is the inexpugnable basis of the entire Positive Philosophy, and gradually every other part of Comte's system formed itself on that rock:—*Super hanc Petram ædificavit Augustus fidem nostram*. When I came back to London, at the age of twenty-four, I set myself steadily to study the elements of physical science; I succeeded in mastering the elementary text-books of Astronomy, Geology, Physics, and Biology; using the manuals of Sir W. Grove, of Herschell, Lyell, and Tyndall. I attended lectures of Richard Owen, Thomas Huxley, John Tyndall, and Edward Liveing. The latter gave me private lectures on the brain of man and the principal senses, with preparations, skeletons, and the like. I read the main biological works of Owen, Huxley, C. Darwin, A. R. Wallace, and of Todd, Bowman, Rymer Jones; and I studied the admirable French manuals of Gall, Béclard, Broussais, Blainville, and Bichat. At the same time I studied the anatomical collections in the British Museum, and in the College of Surgeons, and dipped into those large encyclopædias of practice — Dr. Reynolds' *System of Medicine*, and T. Holmes' *System of Surgery*, which I always have kept at hand on my library shelves. I did my best to master the whole of Comte's *Positive Philosophy* and Herbert Spencer's *Synthetic Philosophy* to which I was one of the original subscribers, reading each volume as it came out.

I do not pretend that this course of study entitled me to be called in any case a man of science, or a man with a scientific education. But it enabled me to grasp the rudimentary conceptions of science, and to understand what Comte meant by his Classification of the Sciences, by his laws of the interdependence of the sciences, of the historical evolution of

science, and how each science becomes the indispensable basis of the next in order, *i.e.* the more complex. By this course of study, which cruelly interfered with my legal education, I was saved from those two intellectual curses of our age: — first from a pedantic specialism, which limits students to a single group of laws and debilitates the whole mind: — secondly, from the presumptuous folly of attempting to settle ultimate principles by vague hypotheses and so-called intuitions, without even an elementary conception of true physical law. It is said that over the entrance to the Academy Plato wrote — “Let no one enter if ignorant of geometry.” Auguste Comte inscribed over the portal of the Positive Philosophy — Let no one enter if not prepared to master the rudiments of science.

I thus became saturated with the sense of invariable law and the relative nature of Man, his planetary abode, and the limits of his possible knowledge. My nearest friends were Doctors of Medicine and Professors of History, all steadily converging to the Positive System which co-ordinates the physical and the moral sciences under a complex interdependent set of synthetic laws. At the house of Richard Congreve I made the acquaintance of George Eliot and of George Henry Lewes. At the house of John Chapman, Editor of the *Westminster Review*, I made the acquaintance of Francis Newman, Herbert Spencer, R. W. Mackay, and other writers in the *Review*. In the seven years that had passed since I took my degree, I had become rooted in a conviction of the universal reign of Law, of the possibility of a real Social science, and in Comte’s Scheme of historical evolution. To this now was added a general knowledge of Comte’s *Positive Polity*, completed in 1855, and a thorough study of the *Origin of Species* and Herbert Spencer’s *Synthetic Philosophy*.

How did this scientific and philosophical preparation react upon my religious belief? I shrank from making any clear sweep of theological doctrines and quietly held on to the general lines of what is oddly called Natural Religion. The sceptical attack on Scripture and Creed has never much interested me. Indeed the moral and intellectual tone of what is commonly called Infidelity was always alien to me; and that of positive Atheism was intensely repulsive. I steadily observed Comte's profound epigram:— "The Atheist is the most irrational of all the Metaphysicians" — *i.e.* he gives to an insoluble problem the solution for which there is the least to be said. I did not read Tom Paine, Voltaire, or Bradlaugh, nor had I any dealing with the "Iconoclast" and Free-Thought movement. It was inconsistent and illogical to hold firmly the positivist scheme of philosophy and of sociology, and yet formally to hold a vague and arid Theism. It is an exceedingly common state of mind in which, I feel, too many able men deliberately halt, under the influence of worldly prudence and intellectual indolence.

At the same time, though the German and French criticism of the Bible was familiar to me through F. Newman, Greg, Mackay, Call, and other writers in the *Reviews*, it did not seem to me of decisive importance. I read the Bible and judged it for myself. When Bishop Colenso published his exposure of the mythical character of the *Pentateuch*, my only feeling was that of surprise that any one should believe it to be anything else, and that an earnest divine should trouble himself with such trifles. And when Jowett tried to soften the old form of the Atonement, I only wondered why he did not use a similar logic to other doctrines. Many things in the Bible had long seemed to me perfectly childish and others shockingly immoral. But there were things as bad in Herodotus and Livy, which we all read and enjoyed. The idea

of Original Sin, Vicarious Sacrifice, and Eternal Damnation, had grown to me to be the barbarous magic of uncivilised ages. No person, no book, no theory, was at all needed to teach me that what we call the Bible was the very miscellaneous literature of an extraordinary, but half-humanised people. Nor did I want sermons or tracts in divinity to show me that the entire scheme of Salvation as propounded in orthodox form was a mere Vision, like Dante's *Inferno* or Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

All this grew up in my mind gradually and peacefully as a whole, not by any violent spasm, not by any bitter sense of having been deceived. The Bible as a book even seemed to me more beautiful and impressive than before, now that I treated it just as I treated the *Divina Commedia*. I now enjoyed as sublime poetry what had before been supernatural revelation or formal ordinance. The long historical sequence of moral and religious evolution from Adam to John at Patmos, mythical as it was, seemed to me an invaluable record of human evolution. The whole scheme of Man's Fall through sin, his reconcilment to his Maker by the love and sacrifice of a divine Saviour, Man's ultimate Redemption and entering into Celestial Bliss — all this became to me a magnificent Allegory — rich with moral and devotional teaching to the human soul, but regarded as objective *fact*, as a worthy ideal of human regeneration, no more to be believed in as *true*, no more to be admired as a *moral standard*, than Plato's *ideas*, or any other beautiful but fantastic hypothesis to be read in these exquisite Dialogues.

I loved the Bible as a book to read more than ever. I honoured the Christian Church in its Mediæval form. But for fifty years the Bible has been to me only one of the indispensable great bodies of literature in the world. And the Christian scheme of Salvation has been to me a sublime

attempt to humanise Mankind on a metaphysical and fictitious basis — a creed which had great uses and an inspiring history a thousand years ago, but which for many centuries has been the main incumbrance to civilisation and the direct source of some of man's worst crimes.

I had long been familiar with Hume's famous argument about Miracles; but it did not require that or any similar logic to assure me of the universal reign of Law in the whole range of human experience. Saturated with Mill, Buckle, Herbert Spencer, and Darwin, the very idea of any arbitrary suspension of any true *law* by volition, whether human or divine, had become to me unthinkable. And when the irrational nature of Miracle as such an arbitrary suspension was felt as an axiom of thought, the entire orthodox scheme of Man's relation to God passed for me into the world of ancient history — to be studied, to be explained, to have full justice done to it — but not to be believed as *true*. It was not a question of "difficulty" as to this or that dogma. The whole scheme became to me a tradition, like the Hindoo or Hellenic mythology.

In the same way, though I was sufficiently acquainted with Biblical criticism through the writers in the *Westminster Review* and their works, original and translated, and then through Renan, Kuenen, Harnack, and the rest, I never took great interest in pulling the Bible narrative to pieces, nor in troubling about the parts and dates of that heterogeneous collection. I read my Bible for myself in no slavish spirit, but with the free mind with which I read Dante, À-Kempis, and the *Acta Sanctorum*. All presented profound mystical beauty, gross superstition, and not a little inhuman barbarism. The idea of any sort of divine inspiration in any of these four seemed to me childish and repulsive. I should as little suppose it as in Homer, Herodotus, or Livy. I could draw

no distinction between Athene teaching Odysseus how to deceive, the ox talking in the Forum, or the Child in the manger without a human father.

NEO-CHRISTIANITY

If I have ever felt any hesitation about so large a change in belief, any qualm of conscience in placing so vast a body of sacred things on a firmer and rational basis, this would have been checked in me by watching the fabric of dishonest "adaptation," fantastic defence, and spurious equivocations, continually raised by official champions of orthodoxy. I felt deeply the moral evil of all this wriggling and prevaricating. It seemed to me as if Milton's Satan was at the ear of Eve whispering to forge illusions, phantasms, and dreams. Full of this indignation I wrote for the *Westminster Review* my criticism of *Essays and Reviews* which I called *Neo-Christianity*. Both criticism and name, which I invented, seem to me after forty-seven years of reflection to have been perfectly just and to have truly described a movement within the Anglican Church which produced some intellectual good and much moral and religious harm.

The article entitled *Neo-Christianity* in the *Westminster Review* N.S. xxxvi. October 1860, was the first piece that I published, and was offered gratuitously to the Editor, Dr. John Chapman, as was everything else I wrote, down, I think, to the year of my marriage and quitting practice at the Bar in 1870. The history of it was this. I now entirely agreed with my friends, the late Dr. John Bridges, Professor E. S. Beesly, and others of my contemporaries at both Universities, in repudiating, with much indignation, the really dishonest practice of promoting within the Established Church and its endowments what was called "Free-handling," but what

was really unavowed repudiation of Christianity as a dogmatic religion.

Nearly all my friends and companions were entire disbelievers in Biblical inspiration, and any supernatural doctrine. Not a few Priests in official positions were the same; and they saw no objection to any one retaining official and nominal churchmanship with such views. I had heard Maurice, Mansel, H. Bristow Wilson, and Benjamin Jowett propound from the pulpit what I felt, and still feel, to be radical rejection of the formal Creeds and Articles of religion. One of my friends, a most conscientious and excellent man, consulted me as to whether he should be ordained, whilst rejecting the Divinity of Christ. I urged him not to take orders; but he took orders and became an eminent Churchman, without changing his views. Another brilliant scholar, an avowed infidel, told us with a grin that at his ordination he mentally repeated the line in Tennyson's *Northern Farmer*:

Do godamoighty know what a's doing a-taäkin' o' meä?

He lived and died a parish priest in the same mind.

On the other hand I now saw constantly my old tutor, Richard Congreve, who had resigned his orders, fellowship, and all offices; was passing his courses as physician and surgeon, and had definitely accepted the social and religious scheme of Auguste Comte. I was myself in close touch with it, but still retained my independent attitude as a Theist of the school of Francis Newman. I was frequently at the house of John Chapman, where my friend Dr. Bridges was an inmate, and much in the company of the principal writers and supporters of the *Westminster Review*; I shared many of their opinions; and heard their criticisms on the theological and philosophic works of the day.

They had of course much to say about *Essays and Reviews*,

which on a visit to Oxford I found to be making there no stir at all; the sympathisers waiting to see the effect of it, and the Orthodox thinking it best to treat it with a conspiracy of silence. One of Mr. Jowett's friends and colleagues told me that they feared it was going to be ignored; and that it was Jowett's desire to have the real character and aim of the book made evident. My friend, one of the ablest of the younger men, said that his own position as a resident tutor, prevented him from doing this; but he urged me to do it; we discussed the book at great length, and in general entirely agreed as to the radical divergence of the seven essays from everything understood to be the orthodox faith. I am certain that there was a concerted effort to claim for clergymen of the Established Church a thorough liberty of Free Thought both in respect to the Scriptures and to the Creeds.¹

During the Long Vacation I accordingly wrote my essay on the new book, and offered it to Dr. Chapman. He was much pleased with it; told me it exactly expressed the views of himself and his friends; and, finding it too long, cut down about a third of my only Manuscript which was burnt. Like every article at the time in that and all other *Reviews*, it was unsigned, but I made no attempt to deny it or to remain anonymous. I honestly believed myself to be doing the essayists a service, and at any rate carrying out the wish of the principal writers. I did not anticipate any serious attack would be made on the authors whose position seemed secure. I thought that if any one was attacked it would be myself, and I was prepared to suffer any condemnation. A personal friend of my own, one of the theological professors, did attempt to have me ejected from the College. And I was

¹ The historian of *English Rationalism* calls the book "the most important single event in the history of the Church of England during the last two hundred years" (Benn, ii, 114).

charged with base motives by the scurrilous prints of the day which reflected *odium theologicum* in its most venomous form. But on the whole it was thought hardly expedient to proceed judicially against a layman, a London barrister, who had long left Oxford and held no office.

No one was more surprised than I was at the hubbub which ensued in the Clerical world, nor more disgusted at the intolerance with which Mr. Jowett and his friends were assailed. A young lawyer who had never published a line did not suppose that a review of his in a free-thought organ was at all likely to cause a panic in the Church of England. He did not think the *Westminster Review* could ever disturb, or even enter, orthodox circles, and he had the sense to see that all he had done was to put a match to an explosive train of thought, which had been long and laboriously prepared by far wiser and abler men.¹

When the orthodox faction began to take legal proceedings, I gave time, money, and every assistance I could bring, to resist the odious persecution of Mr. Jowett and the other clerical essayists. None of them ever complained of my part in the affair. I was always on friendly terms personally with most of them. And when my motives in writing were unjustly attacked by the late Dean Stanley, Mr. Jowett defended my conduct, and wrote me two fine and sympathetic letters, which have been partly published in his *Life*. He

¹ This account is taken from my private Diary, written at the time and dated Jan. 1861. I there wrote: "I felt very acutely how hollow the ground of it was, and I saw the prospect of many good minds being drawn into this compromise instead of fairly seeking for sure truth." "I professed my rejection, almost my disgust, for the inconsistent scepticisms of a philological metaphysician." "It is to me the type of all that is puerile in thought and timid in character in Oxford. I wrote under the influence of strong emotion and tension of mind." "It was somewhat, I fear, spasmodic and combative. But I retract nothing. It fell far short of the truth."

earnestly warned me against Comte, for whom he never had any leanings; but he believed, after all which had passed, that both book and agitation would prove useful to truth and to religion.

Mr. Benn tells us "that Neo-Christianity has, so far, proved conspicuously the faith of the educated classes in England." The liberty that the so-called "*Septem contra Christum*" claimed for the Anglican clergy was practically achieved by the conspicuous failure of all attempts to oust them from the Church; by the famous "dismissal of Hell with costs" in the Judgment of Lord Westbury; by the promotion of Mr. Jowett, the leading spirit of the whole movement, to the Headship of Balliol; the promotion of Mr. Pattison to be Rector of Lincoln; by the advancement of Dr. Temple to the see of London, and then to the Primacy of the English Episcopate. If *Essays and Reviews*, having run through twelve editions in five years, has ceased to be read, it is only because the greater part of its teaching is an open question within the orthodox world, and the rest of it has been much enlarged and revised. If the Broad Church has ceased to be a party, it is because the pale between that Broad and Narrow way, and the Wide and Strait gate, has been effaced or ignored. The agitation of 1861 most certainly could not be repeated to-day.

But what the Church has won in Liberty it has lost in Honesty. When the highest ecclesiastical tribunal, on which sat two mute or impotent Archbishops, decided that a beneficed clergyman might deny the divine inspiration of the Scripture and the objective truth of the Creeds; when it sanctioned the repudiation of Future Punishment as commonly understood; when what ordinary Christians called heresy and even infidelity was officially condoned and rewarded, the inherent insincerity of the Establishment of Cranmer and Elizabeth became manifest. *Septem contra*

Christum was a fact not a taunt. And if the Seven had demolished the old dogma — *Extra ecclesiam nulla Salus* —, it was by substituting for it — *Intra ecclesiam nulla veritas*. The Creeds became a matter of open opinion. Comte usually spoke of our Church as *l'hypocrisie Anglicane*. The Establishment, a creature of Tudor monarchy and Hanoverian aristocracy, still continues to enjoy its vast revenues and its exclusive ascendancy; whilst still sheltering all and any opinions — from veiled Catholicism to a vague Deism, and all the shades intermediate between both.

THE NEW THEOLOGY

I now reissue my review, which for forty-seven years I have refused to do; for I was unwilling to censure men who, however uncandid both intellectually and morally, were no doubt trying to do what satisfied their conscience, and also because I had no taste for destructive criticism, and was absorbed in the task of a positive reconstruction of belief. These reasons no longer apply. The Essayists are all now gone, full of honours and public repute; they left no successors or school; the party they formed or led is no longer active. But the same intellectual double-dealing in things theological exists and is far wider spread. Men who fancy themselves still to be Christians, Churchmen, even preachers of the Gospel, treat it as immaterial whether the Bible be God's truth or a dubious compilation of Oriental documents; whether there be really three Persons who are each God, or there be only one God; whether the son of the carpenter of Galilee was or was not the Creator of the Universe. Crowds of lay Christians, and even some beneficed priests, seem to think it hardly fair to have such questions put to them.

Until the religious world can bring itself to feel that true

religious conscience requires these plain questions to be answered, it is essential to insist on them as antecedent to all honest belief. We have all heard enough of the saving faith of "honest doubt." "Honest doubt" means "facing-both-ways," deceiving self, deceiving others, "making the best of both worlds." In the meantime many of us see an enormously wealthy and privileged Church blessing wanton wars of aggression in the name of the Prince of Peace, bolstering up Prerogative, Monopoly, Reaction, of the rich and privileged orders by invoking the Sermon on the Mount, stinting and starving the education of the people in order to keep the children in their Church control — in effect doing what the orthodox church in Russia does for the bureaucracy of the Tsar. Whilst sacerdotalism does all this, religious reformation requires that serious men should speak words of plain, if unpalatable truth.

From time to time I still look into what is called the "advanced" theology of Anglican divines, and I find it a world of evasion, *double entendre*, and verbose Theosophy. Each philologist destroys the "new theology" of the latest disquisition, and announces wild guesses of his own. It is a world of phantasmagoric surprises, in which everything is something else, and every one has been quite misled. Whether Abraham, Moses, and Joshua represent not persons but tribal myths, remnants of antique totems — or primitive astrology — all this is matter for endless debate; every man, woman, and child is, in a "spiritual sense," an incarnation of "the Supreme Logos"; the Creeds really teach "the immanence of the Divine Goodness" in Humanity. The only fixed point is that the Church never was so beneficent or so powerful.

An honest, manly, intelligent judgment about the old faith is indispensable for any solid formation of the new faith.

Whilst men are ever imploring each other not to unsettle hesitating minds, to avoid all controversy, to respect venerable traditions, the masses will easily stagnate in the old obscurantist habits of mind with all their moral and social evils. The great maxim is true — “He only destroys who can replace.” And it is as true also — that no one can replace till he has cleared the ground for new foundations. The Faith of Humanity admits no Voltairean criticism, with wit as its weapon and humiliation as its purpose. It is far less inclined to destroy than any one of the religions the world has seen: — far more respectful of those it supersedes; for it not only respects them, but embraces their true essence and nobler spirit whilst lopping away their rotten accretions. It will not storm Churches and ruin their works of art, as did Puritan fanaticism. It will not torture Protestants as Catholicism did. It will not extirpate Polytheism as Christianity did; nor engage in furious Crusades as did both Christendom and Islam. But it must make clear the broad difference between a religion founded on Science, in order to idealise Human Nature, and a religion founded on obsolete traditions, in order to glorify a metaphysical hypothesis — which is ever assuming some new cloud-shape.

My critical essay of 1860 is therefore now reissued with hardly any change; for the same incoherences are common to-day. After full reflection of nearly half a century, I fail to see that it was either ill-timed, unjust, or overstated. I am more convinced than ever that *Essays and Reviews* represented a real combination to throw off the bonds of Scripture, Creed, and Articles, even for beneficed priests within the Established Church. And I have never seen any refutation of the specific charges of heterodoxy that our *Review* set forth. The able historian of Rationalism strangely enough suggests that the article of 1860 exaggerated the arguments

of the Essayists; but he admits that the effects of their teaching have since become plain. That indeed this historian himself has amply proved.¹ The Reviewer in fact truly foresaw the logical results of the Essayists' doctrines. They were all either patent or latent in the book. And they are now the views of most cultivated laymen.

The critical essay which follows must speak for itself. As criticism it will stand alone. The remainder of this volume, like the essential part of everything I have said or written on the religious problem, will be found to be directly reconstructive, non-controversial, positive. We entirely repudiate all the negations; be they atheistic, agnostic, secularist, Protestant, or non-conformist. Positivism is always and in everything *Positive*. And Auguste Comte chose the word *Positive* to condense the seven ideas of *real* — *useful* — *certain* — *precise* — *organic* — *relative* — *sympathetic*. I trust that this volume will not be found to derogate from that manifold ideal, even though in seeking to establish the *real*, it has to point to the crumbling and decaying props on which the *unreal* still struggles to maintain its reign, — nay still presumes to claim the obsolete ascendancy with which the State for its own ends invested it in Tudor ages.

CONVERSION TO POSITIVISM

I declined all invitations to continue theological criticism, and in the following years I was occupied with law, economics, and history. I studied the Middle Ages and the great Catholic thinkers, especially St. Augustine, St. Bernard, Aquinas, À-Kempis, Bossuet, De Maistre, the Catholic Hymns and Lives of the Saints. Dr. Congreve published

¹ *History of Rationalism in England*. A. W. Benn. 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1906.

his translation of Comte's *Catechism*, and Dr. Bridges his translation of Comte's *General View*. The four volumes of the *Positive Polity*, the six volumes of the *Positive Philosophy*, Comte's *Popular Astronomy* and his *Subjective Synthesis*, became my constant companions in the original. I obtained the books named in the Positivist Library, and studied most of them; and I collected engraved portraits of some hundred of the leading names in the Positivist Calendar. My small gallery of Heroes, and the busts of great men, have always been around me and beside me at my work.¹ I made frequent visits to Paris, and there made the acquaintance of Pierre Laffitte, Comte's pupil and successor, of Dr. Robinet, Comte's physician and biographer, and of the leading men and women in the Positivist circle. During the ten years between 1860 and 1870 I had steadily assimilated the whole scheme of Auguste Comte, was doing what I could to remedy my defective education in science, and was using the *Library* and the *Calendar* as a guide to study, but I did not seek affiliation to the body in Paris, which still seemed to me premature, nor did I make any attempt to take part in a propaganda of Positivism as a religious system.

On the contrary, I continued to follow Christian worship in many forms — Catholic, Anglican, Unitarian, Baptist. I often heard sermons by Frederick Maurice, Dr. Goulburn, Dr. Liddon, Mr. Stopford Brooke, Dr. Martineau, Mr. Spurgeon, and the Jesuit fathers at Farm Street which I constantly attended. I had an almost morbid craving for Choral services, such as those of the Abbey, St. Paul's, the Temple, or Lincoln's Inn. I made a study of Gothic architecture, and in one way or other have visited with care and the requisite

¹ Especially Aristotle, Descartes, Bacon, Comte: Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Cervantes, Goethe, Scott and Burns: Cæsar, Cromwell, Frederick, Richelieu, Henry IV., Washington.

technical books, the chief cathedrals and mediæval churches and remains both in England and France, in the Rhineland, and Italy. I took to heart Comte's pregnant judgment (long years before Ruskin's time) that "the mediæval cathedrals were the most perfect expression of the ideas and feelings of man's moral nature." But I did not confine myself to Gothic architecture; and I was amused when Ruskin in his grand way, told me "not to chatter about traceries," for I have known a far wider range of buildings than Ruskin, having studied them not only in England and France, but in Germany, Spain, Turkey, Greece, and Egypt — countries which Ruskin never visited in his life.

Having collected photographs and histories of these in my travels, it was a pleasure to me to write analyses and notices; and at times I showed my pictures to popular audiences and gave lectures on their history and meaning. I recall now as the highest impression in Art that I have ever known in my life, when — more than half a century ago — for the first time I entered the sublime west portal of Rheims cathedral, then untouched by the profane restorer, and in the gloaming heard the choir practising an anthem, by the light of a few tapers, as the last rays of the evening sun just touched the jewelled clerestory above. I was alone in the great church.

In this paper I have undertaken, in response to sundry appeals, to give an account of the process of what the *Spectator* called my "conversion" to Positivism. If it is to be done at all I feel bound to make it honest, for what it may be worth "to some shipwrecked brother" as the *Psalm of Life* has it. "Live in the Light" is one of our most sacred mottoes. And I will make a clean breast of it, whatever it cost me. It so happens that in a chest of private papers I came upon an old locked Diary which I wrote for my own eye nearly half a century ago. In it I had written down as truly as I could

what were my own thoughts, beliefs, and hopes, just after the publication of "Neo-Christianity," and during the excitement of the attack on *Essays and Reviews*.

This statement, or confession, it may be called, was dated 1st January 1861. I was then aged twenty-nine, a barrister beginning practice in Lincoln's Inn. The responsibility of suddenly finding myself in the midst of a fierce theological struggle, had made me resolve to meditate seriously on my own belief and aims in life. I wrote them down with a care and deliberation not usual in a private dairy. For forty-six years no eye but my own has ever seen these lines, nor was any eye ever likely to see them in my life-time. The little confession was almost a testamentary paper. It followed and referred to a Will, written in Latin and not intended for legal "proof."¹ It was a season with me of some despondency and disappointment. I hardly looked, and hardly hoped, to have a long life — indeed the first page of the locked Diary was inscribed "*pereuntis peritura.*" It was indeed a kind of *testamentum in procinctu*. But as it is a perfectly authentic account of a youthful mind undergoing a deep upheaval, with many scruples I copy it out as it stands in the old Diary.

A CONFESSION OF FAITH

(DIARY — *January 1861.*)

I believe that before all things needful, beyond all else is true religion. This only can give wisdom, happiness, and goodness to men, and a nobler life to man-

¹ The object of the Diary was stated in the Latin preface as follows:—

Hac in pagina secreta inscribere instituo ea quæ mediter, sperem agam. quo me melius cognoscam; quo meam vitam melius regam, forsitan et post me dilectus aliquis me melius cognoscat. Sic fortasse animi mei affectus, morum meorum ampliacionem, vitæ negotia et officia rectius contemplari poterim — intervallum istud cognoscam inter proposita mea et facta, inter facultates et opera, inter spem et memoriam.

kind. Nothing but this can sustain, guide, and satisfy all lives, control all characters, and unite all men. True Religion alone must rule in every heart, brain, and will, over every people of the whole earth; inspire every thought, hallow every emotion, and be the guide of every act.

Thus the soul of each and the souls of all may be knit in one accord, and every faculty of every being, and every being of every race, may come to join in one; and all may rest in one common faith, each live in the great life, work for the common end, and offer homage to one great Power, above all, in all, and for all. Surely they who know and feel this and live thereby do well, and follow right and truth, though their knowledge be uncertain of what they worship and obey — whether they adore by name Osiris, Vishnu, Jove or Thor, Virgin, Humanity, or God.

What is this true religion? We know not. As yet, it is not. Yet nearer, perhaps, than we think. Much is now clear. Much is coming into light. Dimly we may now see a faith guiding all hearts and lives in one.

When I contemplate the great harmony which stretches through man and nature, and that vast whole which lives, moves, and grows together by equal laws, in natural concord, sympathy, and help, I cannot but recognise one guiding Hand, and acknowledge one great Author. All-powerful? I know not. All-wise? I cannot tell. All-good? I dare not say. Yet surely this vast frame does testify to a Power very awful. Its symmetry points to a Mind truly sublime. And the perpetual goodness, tenderness, and beauty of all breathing things are witness to a Goodness truly adorable.

Can it ever be that men shall cease to ask — How

came this wonder? Whose this wisdom? Whence this Goodness?

I think not. Yet, when they do ask, what must be the answer?

Can it ever be that every thought, emotion, and effort of man can unite in one save as he acknowledges, adores, and serves one who is the centre of all things, both man, and brute, and earth, the source of all we honour in man, of all we love in the things around us, through whom there flows the universal goodness which makes a mother's love and the tenderness of the parent bird — which inspires the joy of all living things and clothes the visible world in loveliness and grace?

Therefore, I believe that God is: who made, loves, and protects man and all things.

How then shall we know Him? — do His will? — serve Him? Has He left us without help, without light, without promise? Inspiration — Revelation — Gospel — there is plainly none. The diviner's rod is past. The oracles are dumb. The tables of stone are broken. The ancient legends are cast aside. So too are old fictions of innate knowledge, of conscious Truth — of Natural Theology. Scripture and Miracles alike are past. Man must be his own Gospel. He must reveal truth to himself — by himself. He must found, or frame, his own Religion — or must have none.

And is he powerless for this? Is he left helpless? Has he not the strength to live, and the mind to learn how best to live?

Truly, if by patient thought and earnest effort, man can build up for himself the law of his life — learn to know his highest happiness — his best training, his truest duty, then he is thereby fulfilling the law of Him who

placed him here; then he is revealing to himself the will of his Creator, and is most truly serving Him with that only service which man can know or perform.

It is this — or nothing. If, when man knows all he can know of man and of nature, he knows not God; if, when he works out his duty in his life, he does not serve Him; if, the submission of his whole soul to that highest law and Power which he can certainly see and know is not worship — then are such things not for men.

This at least the thoughtful spirit will desire and will do — come what may. Thus will he live in confidence and peace, not swaying in perplexity, nor wasting in despair — much less turning again to broken idols.

What may his law of life be? Has man yet reached this goal of human existence? Has he proved the real grounds of truth? As I think — yes. Auguste Comte, as I believe, has truly raised this to be the foundation of all life and thought. He has given order to the sum of all knowledge — wide enough for all minds — deep enough for all hearts — practical enough for all action. In this now long since I rest, in this I live. Through this only do I hope, and work, and trust. This is my real — my sole — my abiding religion.

Much therein I do not see. Much is dark, unmeaning, strange. Yet there is enough abundantly clear and firm, wherein to have faith — whereby to live.

Yet, though this be so, may it not dull my reverence and affection for those Christian traditions which form the noblest part of the inheritance of ages — sustain and inspire the lives of multitudes of good men and good women yet filled — they only filled — with the deepest emotion of the soul, a true and genuine devotion.

Nor may I grow cold to the chorus of worshipping hearts in Christian congregation, or to the solemn words of Scripture, full of memories of past days, hallowed by long use and heartfelt veneration.

Yet withal, whilst cherishing a faith worthy of respect, but now passing away for ever, may I not weaken my soul and waste my life in restless questionings and doubts such as perplex too many hearts — as to Providence and Prayer, and Soul, and Death, and Future.

Normay I shrink from meeting these things face to face.

Of Providence in certain proof and clear reality can I see none save only that providence which the whole human race is to all its members. What other Providence there may be, is not for us to know. Let it suffice to acknowledge that which we can know, believing that man is free — not the slave of Fate, nor the puppet of his Creator. Human Providence we see and know. To recognise this — to be grateful for this — to conspire and accord with this is to me man's highest happiness — duty — and glory.

Prayer indeed is well — so far as it is good for the mind to dwell in thought, and the heart to rest — on that Power which governs all. Yet is this saying true — *laborare est orare*. Strength is lost in vain meditation and in vague yearning — it is misspent in personal petitions and secret ecstasies. To do right is better than to feel right. To live is better than to adore.

What should Soul be save that which each man feels to be — himself — his sense of force — his conscious being? Will this survive the grave? — some ask. How can I tell? Why should it? Why should it not? Why need we ask?

I may be glad to hope it — willing to trust it — yet

little curious to know. I — myself — my influence — my acts — my thoughts — my life, most surely shall and must outlive the grave, and live in others for ever, growing through all time in new conditions and extent, mingled for ever with the great current of all human life. In this faith I rest; towards this I labour: more trusting and more clear each day. Nor can I suffer a trust so real, so absorbing, and so inspiring, to be weakened by roving fancies of the restless brain or vague yearnings after a mysterious existence.

A Future there may be. Let us say there *is*, beyond this world. Yet, be it what it may, we cannot know it by imagining. We cannot prepare for it, save by living here on earth. And, if after the grave there is indeed another life — as many true hearts trust — they only will attain it to the fullest who have best lived here. They only will be counted worthy of it who have worthily done their duty now.

Death then has no terrors, and need bring no gloom. Let each of us live like a soldier in the field, prepared to die each instant without a thought, calmly working out life to the last drop — calmly surrendering it at the end.

Enough of these things. Life is too real for endless speculations — too serious for mystical forebodings. It needs a teaching to quell all discord among men, to control all lawless thoughts, to heal all social plagues. For this — this common end — let each of us strive. But not wrapping himself in visions of personal beatitude — nor letting himself be unmanned by hopes and fears of his own particular soul — looking for no individual or special blessing — not hoping, wishing, caring for anything alone — to be himself fortunate in this world, or to be saved himself in any other world.

The fate of each man is bound up with the destinies of his fellows. As they suffer, he suffers; as they flourish, he flourishes; as they live hereafter, he lives hereafter. To live with them, and for them, to work with them, and for them, to die with them, and for them, — this is all that man can know of duty — it is all he can desire for happiness, and peace.

Thus let each live in zeal and in joy — clearing from life all doubt, inaction, and gloom, seeing ever more clearly the solid foundation of his faith, the proved truth of human life — feeling ever more deeply that duty and happiness can meet only in this — *To live for others* — yet acknowledging ever more devoutly the sublimity which overrules us — loving ever more ardently the boundless goodness of human nature, its perpetual grace and truth and beauty, and in it seeing the spirit of its Maker. And so too more and more grateful for each daily blessing, for the gifts of dead and living servants of Man and of God; more and more reverencing the sacred names of family and friends, parents and home. Thus at last the Soul within and the Activity without may join in one harmony and one work, devoted only to return by affection and by sacrifice some infinitesimal fraction of that lifelong service, which each of us from birth to death receives from each and all.

Thus may each live happy and active; accepting every task and any lot with humble cheerfulness and wise content, — not mindful of terrors, external happiness, success — conscious only of a part in the great destiny of man, and dying, when death comes, as they die in battle, over whose bodies their comrades pass to victory — regretting only that they fall in the first hours of the fight.

May something of this spirit yet grow in me. May I yet have time to begin my duty — to undo the sin and waste of youth, to give my mite also to the common good — growing each day more clear in faith, more zealous in act, more loving, gentle, and true. Thus may I live, if I have yet to live, in labour and in trust, and die, if I am now to die, in sure hope of good to me and to all men.

January 1861.

POSITIVE FAITH

In the forty-six years that have passed since these meditations were written, it was inevitable but that a change of view would have occurred. But the change of view due to deeper study of science and a wider experience of the world was a change of degree rather than of substance, practical more than intellectual. I shall presently explain in detail wherein it consisted. In the main it was a gradual fading away of the conception of Personality behind the mystery of the Universe and a clearer perception of the Human Providence that controls Man's destiny on earth.

The paramount importance to Man of Religion — at once dominant over brain and heart — a living reality and working power — the necessity for this has not only never left me at any time, but year by year has grown deeper as a conviction, and more familiar as a rule of life. But as the indispensable need of true religion grew stronger in my mind, I more and more came to feel that religion would end in vague sentimentality, unless it has an object of devotion, distinctly grasped by the intellect and able to kindle ardent emotions. The nature — if not the name — of the Supreme Being is in truth decisive. Unless the Supreme Power be felt to be in sympathy with the believer — be akin to the believer — be in active touch with his life and heart — such a religion is

merely a dogma — it cannot be a guide of life — the spring of action — the object of love.

As a further study of Astronomy, Physics, and Biology impressed on me all that is meant by the Infinite, the incalculable immensity of the Universe and all it holds, the infinitesimal littleness of man's earth — even of the solar system — relatively to this Universe, I came to see the arrogance of making man in any sense the measure of Eternity, Omnipotence, Infinitude. To apply our anthropomorphic fancies to the Providence that we think has created and rules the Universe, at last seemed to me to be impertinence, silliness, a profane dream.

Again the deepening sense of the persistence of human action in the sum of civilisation — the spiritual continuity of Humanity triumphing over the material death of the body — gradually drove out in my mind any yearning for celestial glory. And I came to feel all the intellectual confusion and moral deterioration involved in the popular superstition of a super-human Heaven — where life would not be worth living (at least where a worthy life was impossible) — which had no place for Family, Country, or Humanity.

On the other hand, as I recognised the trivial fictions, the barbarous pettiness, of the obsolete Theology, I fully realised the scientific reality and the infinite resources of the religion of Humanity. Its creed could never be doubtful, for it rests on accepted science. Its manifold sympathies enter into every pore of human life, and touch chords in every fibre of human nature. Its potential worship offers to the imagination magnificent fields for the cultivation of noble Art and the ideal embodiment of every manly and every womanly virtue. To my historic training and my æsthetic passion, it seemed that the worship of the Future was destined far to surpass the stunted worship of the Past, for it would

combine and develop all the cults of all the religions — Egyptian, Judaic, Confucian, Buddhist, Hellenic, Roman, Byzantine, or Catholic.

For some time I joined the Working Men's College in Great Ormond Street and gave some courses of lectures on History. But Mr. Maurice, the devoted Founder and Principal, vehemently resisted my efforts to have a regular scheme of studies laid down and especially a systematic survey of history. He perceived, not untruly, the ideas of Comte and of Congreve in all proposals I made. Accordingly I started a course of history lectures of my own in a Free-Thought Hall in Cleveland Street, to which I was introduced by George Jacob Holyoake. I gave from that platform the lectures published in my first *Meaning of History* in 1862, and I then formed a very interesting class of men and women attached to the Secularist movement, to whom I lectured, first with a general sketch of Ancient History, then on Modern History and the detailed story of the French Revolution.

During the sixties I was occupied with Trades-Union interests on which I wrote constantly in the *Beehive* newspaper, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and then the *Fortnightly Review*; and I served on the Trades-Union Royal Commission from 1867 to 1869. During this period I took no part in the religious problems of the time, except that I wrote in 1869 in the *Fortnightly Review*, the article entitled *The Positivist Problem*, which led to a spirited controversy with Sir J. Fitzjames Stephen in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. In this article I distinctly said that I was not one of those who definitely accepted Positivism as a religion; nor was I a member of the small community then directed by Dr. Richard Congreve. I said it seemed to me premature to form any group until there was an adequate body of persons and of families seriously bent on observing formal institutions, with a definite religious education and recognised forms of worship.

THE POSITIVIST GROUP

During the sixties I was occupied entirely with law, economics, and politics, and was in close touch with the leaders of the Trades Unions, and the International and Reformers' Agitations. In 1867 a body of friends met in my rooms in Lincoln's Inn and agreed to establish the Positivist political and social Union. This body has met without interruption for forty years, and has constantly put out manifestoes, appeals, and programmes on the political, social, and international questions of the day. These efforts were made in the interest of peace, of justice between nations, and of social progress. The Presidents of the Society have been Dr. Congreve, Professor Beesly, and Mr. S. H. Swinny. I have been, and still am, a member of the Society, but I have never held any official position in it.

When in 1870 Dr. Congreve resolved to open a small hall in Chapel Street, to be known as the Positivist School and afterwards as the Church of Humanity, I thought it to be quite premature, as no sufficient body of persons definitely committed to the active Positivist propaganda and cult was yet collected. I did what I could to postpone this step, but I did not choose to secede from it. I continued for many years to attend the meetings, which at that time consisted entirely of lectures on history, philosophy, and politics, drawn from the Positivist Polity; I gave an annual subscription to the expenses; and presented as decoration a collection of typical portraits. During the absence abroad of Dr. Congreve, I twice gave courses of lectures on historical evolution; I gradually accepted the rudimentary kind of rites instituted by Dr. Congreve; but I did not see my way to join the French Society founded by Comte in Paris.

In 1871 I was made a member of the Cosmopolitan Club by Lord Houghton, and of the Metaphysical Society by Lord Arthur Russell; and in 1875 I was made a member of the Political Economy Club, by Mr. John Morley. At these gatherings I was thrown into the society of some of the leading minds in politics, literature, and philosophy. The indefatigable secretary, and practically the founder, of the Metaphysical Society, was the present Sir James Knowles, who became editor, first of the *Contemporary Review*, and then of the *Nineteenth Century*, which under his hands has had so great a career. At his invitation I frequently was able to discuss the religious problems in both these *Reviews*, as well as in the *Fortnightly Review*, then in the hands of my life-long friend, John Morley.

In various papers (to which I need not refer) I tried to defend the Positivist cause against criticism from John Ruskin, Herbert Spencer, Professor Huxley, Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, Mr. Mallock, Mr. Arthur J. Balfour, and others. It has been a great misfortune to me to find myself so frequently engaged in what looked like controversy. But I was really always on the side of the defence, and I stood too often quite alone in seeking to dispel misconceptions, first from one side and then from another. Let us not forget that every advance in thought, whether philosophical or religious, has been won by animated discussion — nay by unsparing exposure of antiquated sophisms.

Those who with pious horror declaim against controversy in things religious should remember the language of the gentle Jesus about Scribes and Pharisees, — the “generation of vipers,” even to his resort to a scourge; the vituperations uttered by St. Augustine, St. Bernard, by Luther, Calvin, Knox, and Bossuet, to say nothing of the Vatican and Protestant divines.

When Dr. Congreve in 1879 determined to part company with Pierre Laffitte in Paris, I declined, along with most of my friends and colleagues, to follow his example; and from that date I have had no part with the group at Chapel Street. I am not aware that any difference of opinion, much less any divergent understanding of the Positivist Synthesis, has ever separated the group in Chapel Street from that in Newton Hall and Clifford's Inn. Nor has any ill-feeling ever existed between the two bodies, any more than between neighbouring colleges in one University. There have grown up, I am told, certain differences in practice, but the gossip about "rivalry" and "animosity" is merely part of the gratuitous legend which springs up round every novel and unpopular movement.

When Pierre Laffitte formed an English Positivist Committee I was one of the seven members; and I was the President of it from 1880 until 1905 when I nominated Mr. S. H. Swinny as my successor. The body of which, with the aid of an admirable and most harmonious committee, I was director, occupied Newton Hall for the twenty-one years from 1881 to 1902, and since then has been located in Clifford's Inn. From the first our Hall had the threefold object roughly described as Chapel, School, and Club — *i.e.* devoted to religious gathering, to systematic education, and to political action. On Sundays the meetings were mainly used to set forth the meaning and uses of the Religion of Humanity. During the week classes were held in Science, Art, Languages, History, and Sociology. On Fridays once a month the Society meets to discuss political and international questions on a given topic.

The paper which may be read elsewhere gives a summary of the kind of teaching which was attempted in the Hall. The courses included Astronomy, Geometry, Chemistry, Biology, and Sociology. The charge made by some Agnostic

specialists that Positivism is indifferent to Science was an absurd fiction. Science has been continuously taught in Newton Hall by many professional men and trained lecturers in each branch of science. A large part of those who have taken part in the Positivist propaganda from the first have been graduates in medicine and in physics. One of the most interesting of the Newton Hall institutions was the practice of visiting the birthplace, home, and burial place of illustrious men, the great historic museums, galleries, churches, and cities, and especially the annual visit to Westminster Abbey, and the delivery of memorial addresses at each of these pilgrimages. Our practice has been largely followed by other bodies, and is becoming more and more popular and permanent.

Apart from the scientific classes, the political debates, and the social meetings in the Hall, and also distinct from the religious addresses on Sunday, there have been held from time to time commemorative sermons or ceremonies for Infancy, Education, Adult Age, Marriage, Choice of a Profession, Maturity, Burial. These were the principal of the nine Sacraments, as Auguste Comte called the rites which he assigned to signalise the great epochs of life. In resorting to the old Roman term — *sacrament* — he of course meant nothing in any sense supramundane or mystical. The institution was a simple mode of impressing on the recipient and on those present the personal and social meaning of each irrevocable phase of human life. They answer to Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, and Funeral, as understood in the Churches; and to these Comte proposed to add ceremonies to mark Adolescence, Destination, Maturity, Retirement, and final Incorporation.

The order of these very simple rites and the discourses given for the most part fell to me to undertake. In so doing,

I need hardly say, I disclaimed any pretension to any kind of sacerdotal function. Circumstances and the importunity of fellow-believers forced us, somewhat prematurely as I thought, to open a special hall for our Positivist group. The same causes compelled me to accept the task of directing the committee nominated by our Director in Paris. Our friends insisted on some formal rite analogous to Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, and Burial, for which they could not look to any Christian Church. I neither suggested nor urged anything of the kind. I was asked to speak on each occasion. And I spoke as a layman, authorised by the central direction in Paris, to express the Positivist view of each ceremonial. The forms used were made public. They are quite rudimentary, and little more than reflections on the various aspects of familiar social events.¹

In this, as in every other part I had in the Newton Hall movement, I was simply obeying an urgent call from my fellow-believers, rather than seeking to impose on them any belief of my own. The group formed itself spontaneously, and somewhat against my advice. When it was formed, I did not feel that I could in honour stand aside. The presidency of it was indeed thrust on me without any act of mine. The growth and development of its institutions was also spontaneous, not due to any initiative from me. I avoided any idea of enrolling nominal or casual adherents. My incessant care was to prevent a small group of men and women who thought alike, and chose to live by a common

¹ These "services," to use a conventional but incorrect term, have been frequently held in Newton Hall and in Clifford's Inn. Besides these occasions the Marriage form was used by myself at the wedding of Dr. Stanton Coit, and it has been adapted by Dr. Washington Sullivan. The burial service was used or adapted by myself at the death of Mr. Cotter Morison, of Mr. Frey, a Russian exile, of Mr. George Macdonnell, and of Mr. Grant Allen and others.

ideal of life, from ever crystallising into an exclusive congregation — from coming near to anything that could be called “a sect.” In this I entirely succeeded.

FAITH IN MAN

It is now more than thirty years since I have found rest in perfectly settled convictions of spiritual life; for nearly the whole of that time I have endeavoured to teach principles of the Human Faith, and I have been before the world as a leader in the Positivist movement. When I ventured to take up a task so grave and responsible I was well past middle life; was happily married to a wife who shared my convictions and joined in my work; we had a growing body of fellow-believers and were bringing up our family in the spirit of our common faith. All through that period no shadow of doubt in general principles has ever crossed my mind, however much many things of practical application still remain for me ideals for the future to solve. Nor have I known in the same period any shifting of the ground in the foundations; and I have taken every precaution to have my belief respected by those I shall so soon leave behind me.

I feel that I possess a real, vital, sustaining, unfailing, and inseparable *religion*: — part of my daily life; responding to every appeal; inspiring each act and thought hour by hour; making clear every moral and spiritual problem. This is no metaphysical thesis about the Origin of the Universe, but the present sense of touch with a Providence that enters into every side of daily life. It speaks in every true word which inspires, warns, or consoles us; when we are in doubt, or weary, or in distress; whether by the still whisper of memory, or by the clear voice of our fellow-beings; whether of the living or the dead.

Our Providence is no Sabbath visitant; we need no Church or Chapel to contain it; it requires neither priest, nor congregation, nor ritual to manifest its will; it can be found and heard in the busiest crowd about us, in the commonest intercourse of trade, or society, even of artistic enjoyment; nor does it summon us to enter into the silent communion of our chamber, with clasped hands and bended knees. The Human Providence stands ever there about our daily life, instant by instant. No word that is uttered, no sight that is seen, can be wholly and absolutely beyond its ken, or apart from its interests and its sympathies. This is that ever-present religion such as, at times, Bernard, À-Kempis, Theresa, may have known — but which current Theology cannot enable man or woman to-day to know in active life of the twentieth century.

And, as we live ever in presence of the real Providence, which it is our happiness to serve, to obey, and to honour, without whose help and guidance we are but waifs and strays in the world — so we live ever in the presence of a future life, wherein our feeble span in the flesh will be continued as a living force till it is incorporated in the great Being which knows not death. We do not live in habitual presence of death, but of life — of a life perfectly continuous with our visible and sensitive life; entirely commensurate with that life, analogous to that life, plainly intelligible and obviously real.

The moral and religious effect of so restoring to man the sense of a true immortality of the soul becomes manifest. In the days of our darkness, when we were still under the thralldom of the Old Adam, we could not feel this deep incentive to life and ground of hope. Taught to regard the life on earth as a pilgrimage in a vale of tears, there was little to do in it which could affect an immortality in Heaven —

unless it were prayers, hymns, and religious "exercises." We now feel that every hour of every day in some minute degree is still shaping for each of us that immortality on earth, which we are fashioning step by step whilst breath endures, and which must remain to bless or to condemn our memories whether we know it or not — whether we desire it or not.

This living and abiding sense of our real immortality on earth, as our active lives are carried on by our fellow-beings, not only in memory and in love and gratitude, but in act and in practical conduct; not only by those who have known and loved each of us, but by those unknown ones, even in a distant future, whom even remotely, however slightly, our own lives have influenced, comforted, or aided — this sense of a real immortality is no fantastic dream of a neurotic mind, but is a solid fact realised habitually by a congregation of men and women. And in a later page may be read an address which on the Day of all the Dead was given by myself and accepted by them, as a summary of our inmost hopes.

It should be understood that the Thoughts and Memories collected in this volume represent not merely the personal beliefs of a single writer, but they are the settled convictions and habitual experiences of a body of men and women associated for some thirty years together, convictions and experiences by which they have striven to live and to work; in which they have trained up their children; resting in which they have been content to die, and to lay their departed loved ones in the grave. These convictions and hopes are best embodied in a volume entitled *The Service of Man — Hymns and Poems* (1890 and 1905), a collection of verses which for some twenty years have been used by the choir of our friends at Newton Hall and elsewhere. It was compiled by my wife, who organised and directed the choir.

And I can best condense the present *apologia* by citing a few lines which she signs :—

In sorrow and humility,
Great Human Heart we fly to Thee,
To gather comfort from thy store,
And strength and love to serve Thee more.

And there all meaner thought laid by,
With mind and heart uplifted high
And freed at length from vain desires
The soul is purged in love's pure fires.

It may be that this Providence is neither omnipotent nor omniscient, but most imperfect, often erring, like any one of us. But then, for that very reason, it is so close to us, so much akin to us in every want, so perfectly in sympathy and touch with us. It is no purely ideal symbol of perfection. It is the most undeniable fact we know : it is the largest living power on earth. A thousand desires which no reasonable man or woman would venture to address to the Absolute Almighty are well within the interests and the guidance of Humanity. The Humanity of Christ Jesus was a beautiful and spiritual dream ; which, so long as we could hold to its historic reality, was a conception as stimulating as it was magnificent. But those to whom it has become a mere religious utopia fall back on the solid presence of the Humanity of Man.

The providential character of the sum of civilisation is a positive, not a negative conclusion. It denies nothing, excludes nothing, interferes with nothing. There is no Atheism in recognising the benefits which civilisation has bestowed on the human race ; in cherishing the great truth that the human race has been continually rising into a nobler civilisation. The sublime mysteries presented to us by the spectacle of the Universe, its infinite powers, its boundless

extent, remain the primal mysteries still. The human Providence, with awe and resignation, accepts the mysteries which it neither seeks to minimise, nor ventures to solve. To solve the mysteries of creation is the business of metaphysics, not of religion.

The sense of the inconceivable littleness of the individual — humbleness of soul — devotion of the whole nature to a supreme and benevolent Power — all this remains to us in as lively a way as it ever did to any worshipper of the Trinity. Indeed, it is far more vivid and active, because it is perfectly natural and intelligible. Is not the sense of sin enlarged in depth and efficiency, when it is felt to be wrong-doing against those with whom we are in daily communion; when every act of ill-will, selfishness, and passion, is seen in its direct effects to be injurious to those about us; an offence against society, an act of treachery to the higher self? Nay, the evil things done towards self-respect, done in secret, unknown to the world, are as truly recognised to be evil by the sinning conscience, whether or not they be laid bare to the Divine eye.

The test of any religious system lies in its power to deal with the problems of Death. And the Human Faith would be unworthy of consideration if it failed to meet these problems with a stout spirit, with peace, with hope. It teaches us from childhood, not that this life is nothing worth, a vain and fleeting shadow; but rather, that this life is all in all, and not an hour of it but is reckoned up as a trust to be used or wasted, spent for the good of those who are here and who shall come after us; that the value of each human soul is in the good work it has done on earth. It teaches that death ennobles, consummates, and gives a real, albeit a humble, sainthood to every true and worthy life; that death opens up to every son and daughter of man the sure and certain hope that life has

not been lived in vain, that its good will live in the memory of those who will keep its memory green; and in after generations, when that memory may have withered in time, the activity itself will survive incorporated with the stream of human progress.

This sure and certain hope, which we call the subjective Immortality of the Soul, is wholly independent of metaphysical hypotheses, for it is a plain conclusion of moral and social science. The sum total of each active life must infallibly act and react on all those whom it has ever touched directly or indirectly. The mother *makes* the infant; the home makes the boy and girl; the family makes society, as society makes the family, as Englishmen make England, as England makes Englishmen. The evolution of civilisation, the continuity of any nation, society, or institution, would be impossible but for this personal and social tradition of thought and feeling and energy. We are all members one of another, as the great Apostle said; but we are all in a sense the makers one of another.

In the case of the great this is too obvious to be gainsaid. Homer, Jesus, St. Paul, Dante, Shakespeare are far more truly alive to-day than they were during their hard, troubled, and vagrant lives:—to the great of their time it seemed a life obscure or despicable. But the same sociologic truth is just as certain relatively in the case of the humble. Their lives persist for what they were really worth, whether they know it themselves whether others remember it or not. It is an indestructible attribute of Humanity. It is an active force on this earth, so long as Earth and Man coexist. And it is entirely independent of the problem of a separate entity or immaterial Soul and of the ascension of that Soul to a celestial immortality above.

Here, as in all other things, the Human Faith asserts

instead of denying, supplies a consolation where there was a void, develops instead of destroying the spiritual resources of theological religion. In this it is in open contrast with every type of Materialism, Atheism, Scepticism, and Agnosticism. It recognises the incalculable services rendered to the religious spirit by the creative ideas of the Gospel, and by the moral institutions of the Church.

It adopts and develops the dominant idea of a Supreme Being who directs our lives and claims our devotion. And it makes this idea of Providence easier, more real, more sympathetic by showing us that this Providence may be found on earth in our homes, in our country, in the brotherhood of man. It adopts and develops the inevitable desire for Prayer, by making it the spiritual communion with all we know best in the world of sense, and all we imagine loftiest in the world of thought and in the record of the past. It adopts and develops the institution of Worship by making it the constant idealisation of the Great and Good. It gives a rational meaning to the Soul, as being not a casual visitant to self, but as being the very self, destined to continue a growing force, when the visible self shall be seen no longer, and to be one with, nay a part of, the Supreme Being, whilst time shall continue to be.

Here then is new meaning, new life, given to the ancient spiritual beliefs of the Christian world. Christianity is a part of, an introduction to, the Human Faith; a symbolic and hypothetical adumbration of it, not its antagonist. We might almost adopt the words of Jesus, when he said he came to fulfil the law and the prophets. We rob none of their faith. We destroy none. We despise none. We seek only to console, to strengthen, to supply a void. They who are content with their own creeds will hold to them untroubled. These early human beliefs are not in the same plane with the

Human Faith, any more than they are in the same plane with Botany or Biology. It is where the superhuman convictions are shaken to their foundation, and the celestial hopes and consolations are passing away like the mists before the rising sun, that we ask men and women who think boldly for themselves to try if sure ground may not exist in a scientific Faith in Man, and in hopes of a spiritual life to be found on this earth in communion with all that is best in our common manhood whether in the present or in the past.

NATURAL RELIGION

A mediæval monk in his cell, a hermit of the Thebaid, in the ages of superstition and ignorance, might possibly, by intense mental strain, pass much of his existence in a sort of ecstatic communion with spiritual beings of his imagination, might fancy himself surrounded by unearthly agencies, whether friendly or malign. But in the twentieth century, in practical life, all this has become impossible and grotesque. Of a thousand things that every hour busy men of the world hear, see, think, and do, hardly one or two can be imagined in relation to an Absolute, Incomprehensible, Omnipotence, or by any sober mind thought of in connection with such a Power. When Lear, Hamlet, Othello, filled the poet's soul — or say Beatrice, Portia, Falstaff, and Bottom — did he feel himself inspired by the spirit of the Holy Wisdom? Yet in every line he was inspired by the spirit of Humanity. It was around him, in mysterious communion with him, it was within him.

When the politician is troubled about the framing of a new law, the complications of international policy, the reform of an ancient abuse, does he to-day "seek counsel of the Lord," as the Ironsides did, when the Bible was the literal Word of

God; does he "wrestle with his Maker in the spirit," with groans, tears, and the pouring forth of texts? When an English official has to face an earthquake, or the eruption of a volcano, does he fall on his knees in the midst of the falling walls, like a negro Baptist in Jamaica, or rush to crowd the churches, like a Neapolitan peasant or a Santiágo Spaniard? The cultivated and practical man of to-day flies instantly to human resources, is guided by human science, and staves off suffering and death from thousands by calling in all the resources of learning, foresight, presence of mind, which the Providence of Humanity has trained him to use.

In the twentieth century the business of real life turns round Industry, Inventions, Art, Vital appliances in all forms. We battle with malaria, plagues, famines, all noxious conditions, by scientific research, infinite patience, and continuous observation of facts. We add a tenth to the average of life; we spare intolerable agonies to untold millions; we have halved the cruel holocaust of infants. For nearly two thousand years millions of prayers have ascended day by day to Christ, Virgin, Saints, and even to devils. All was in vain. The prayerful attitude of mind much added to the horror and the slaughter, as mothers flung themselves on their dying and infected children, and fanatical devotion thrust aside all sanitary provisions with its besotted pietism. Humanity only recovers its health and peace, in proportion as Theology slowly dies down. Which providence protects the children of men most lovingly, most wisely — the Divine Providence, or the Human?

As knowledge and civilisation increase, our old anthropomorphic idea of Divine Providence gradually dwindles down to a logical abstraction as little human as the Binomial Theorem. As our sense of religion becomes more spiritual and less materialist, the devout spirit shrinks with horror

from attributing Absolute Perfection and Divine Love to the Mosaic tribal God Yaweh, to the Byronic Psalmist's terrible "God of the Holy Places" — war-songs fit for some Mahdi in the Soudan. A famous Oxford theologian told us that our sense of the Almighty must "be defecated to a pure transparency." Our conscience refuses to think of Ideal Perfection as touched by any human emotion. The Absolute Infinity cannot endure conditions of any kind. But so, the Unconditioned Infinite is incommensurate with the finite and conditioned man. Even if it were mentally possible, it becomes morally gross, to supplicate this Unconditioned Infinite to manifest its Omnipotence in the petty trivialities of human life. That is to say, the more sublime, the more spiritual, is man's conception of Godhead, the less capable does the conception become of filling the place of a working and real religion.

A rude barbarian in all ages and a Russian peasant in our age imagines Heaven (that is, the visible sky) to be alive with invisible beings which are only enlarged images of the human potentates he knows. He has no more difficulty in appealing to these beings, to God and the Mother of God, than he has in offering a petition to the Governor, Tsar, and Tsarina; for the invisible Great Father seems to be much more accessible than the bodily Tsar or Little Father. The cultivated Western European shrinks from so gross a personification of Divine Power. As a very acute Biblical critic, a stout champion to the Church, told us, the very idea of personality in the Author of the Universe is a clumsy anthropomorphism; and we can best express our religious sense of awe by the phrase "a stream of tendency." To the philosophic mind *person* inevitably denotes the limited, the conditioned, the human. But to the philosophic mind Absolute Omnipotence is the negation of all that is limited, conditioned, human. Thus

a divine personality is philosophically a contradiction in terms. But a divinity to which it would be profane to attribute personality can never form the object of a living religious faith.

As the old geocentric astronomy broke down, the whole scheme of anthropomorphic theology perished in its ruins. So long as great minds and truly religious natures could conceive with Dante that our earth was a fixed centre of creation, round which sun, moon, stars, and the concentric cycles of Heaven rolled day and night, night and day, it was possible to imagine divine Beings with a personality akin to ours, and a scheme of salvation of which man was the object. But astronomy reduced our puny planet to an infinitesimal speck in a limitless Universe. Science now reveals to us a formless void of infinite extension, wherein our mighty Sun is but a very modest unit amidst countless millions of suns, all of them, it seems, moved by elemental forces, having incalculable velocities, chaotic cataclysms, and abysmal transformations, such as make man's imagination reel. And we are told to see in this Infinite maze the God of Israel who inspired the Book of Genesis and held converse with Moses on Sinai, who then a thousand years later opened a vision of Heaven itself to the author of the Apocalypse.

After Astronomy came Geology. Scientific study of the heavenly bodies flung man down from the proud position of dwelling in the centre of creation and being the chief work of its Creator, into that of the most utterly microscopic mote on a satellite of one of the smaller stars which stud the firmament. And then a scientific study of our earth revealed that man himself, far from having been created only two days after the sun, had appeared as a very late denizen for a minute fraction of the vast epochs during which neither man nor living thing existed on a planet: itself convulsed by a series of changes of heat and cold, of water and of fire, rock and mud.

Not only had man's world become an inconceivably minute speck in an infinite Universe, instead of the centre of creation, but Man himself, instead of being the masterpiece of Creation, had only been found on earth at an inconceivably small period of earth's whole existence.

When Astronomy and Geology had destroyed man's pride of place in the world and his primacy in the work of creation, there came the doctrine of Evolution in Biology. Whatever may be its final decisions in points of detail, no cultivated man now doubts that Biology testifies, not to a Fall of Man but to a Rise of Man : — a long, gradual, broken process perhaps, but on the whole one which gives evidence that, whilst living things, through incalculable æons of time, were evolved from lower to superior forms, Man himself was one of the latest ; and, most certainly, like them, had been evolved from vastly inferior forms of humanity — nay indeed of life itself.¹

Nothing can enable us to conceive the infinitesimally trivial position of Man in the Universe as revealed by modern Science, whether we consider him in Space, in Time, or in the secular evolution of matter or of life. Watch the faintest mote hovering in a sunbeam and try to imagine its relation in scale to our earth ; isolate the minutest microbe perceptible by the most powerful microscope, and imagine it in relation to the most distant star shown by the most powerful telescope in the nebula of Orion — all this would be nothing compared with the infinitesimal littleness of Man in the Infinite Universe. And now, try to imagine this mite pronouncing on the nature and the attributes of the Author and Ruler of this Universe : or try to imagine the Author and Ruler of this Uni-

¹ Scientific ribaldry assures us that the trees which Adam and Eve frequented in the Garden of Eden were the natural shelter of arboreal catarrhine apes.

verse attending to the supplications and providing for the wants, sufferings, and human yearnings of this infinitesimal mite.

In relation to the immeasurable Universe and to its incomprehensible *Order* — or, it may be, *Disorder* — the human mite and the microscopic microbe stand equal on a par. An inch, a mile, a league, a hemisphere, mean the same in the ratio of Infinity. It is as vain for the human mite, as it would be for the microscopic microbe, to form a conception of its Creator, or to call the Creator to its aid. How dare this mite pretend to affirm that this Creator of the Illimitable has *mind, thought, will, love, goodness* — or any other human faculty? What can this mite mean when it boasts of being hereafter transfigured to be one with this Incomprehensible Omnipotence? It does not know — it says — it hopes — it believes — it does not understand, and so forth. Then why believe that true religion is based on an idea so misty that it cannot be stated in intelligible words, and cannot be grasped in definite and coherent thought?

Nay — this mite believes that the very God of very God — by whom the worlds were made — took human shape, bore human toils, and suffered shameful agonies — all in order to redeem the race of mites from endless torment and to appease the wrath of his own Parent, who would not be satisfied without a bloody sacrifice. The mite believes that he — the most infinitesimal mite in the Infinite Universe — was the one supremely favoured; yet for nearly two thousand years the major part of the human race refused to believe it, and a large part of those who say they do, act as if they had never heard they were the object of this unspeakable favour, this stupendous sacrifice. Which is the more deliriously extravagant — the disproportionate condescension of the Infinite Creator, or the self-compla-

cent arrogance with which the created mite accepts, or rather dreams of, such an inconceivable prerogative?

His planet is one of the least of all the myriad units in a boundless Infinity; in the countless æons of time he is one of the latest and the briefest; of the whole living world on the planet, since the ages of the primitive protozoon, man is but an infinitesimal fraction. In all this enormous array of life, in all these æons, was there never anything living which specially interested the Creator, nothing that the Redeemer could care for, or die for? If so, what a waste creation must have been! What became of the Redeemer's love and sacrifice in the infinite æons before the Incarnation? Was there no living thing whereon He could expend the riches of His pity and love? Or were there millions of other miracles of Incarnation, Crucifixion, and Ascension in other worlds of which we know nothing? Why was all this tremendous tragedy, great enough to convulse the Universe, confined to the minutest speck of it, for the benefit of one puny and very late-born race? "We do not know! — we cannot even imagine! — we do not dare so much as to ask!" says the Christian priest — "but it is God's own truth." This is the Catholic faith, which except a man believes faithfully, he cannot be saved!

NO ATHEISM — SCEPTICISM — NOR MATERIALISM

There is nothing in this argument of ours tending to Atheism — to Scepticism — to Materialism. Quite the contrary. All this is but the larger and purer conception of the profound problem of the Origin of the Universe. It is a view of a First Cause — to use the language of meta-

physics — more sublime, transcendental, spiritual, than the gross and obsolete idea of a Creator as conceived by Jews, Apostles, and mediæval monks. It shocks plain men to-day to see in the Sistine Chapel or the National Gallery the Almighty represented as a divine Hercules or Jupiter Optimus Maximus, with a long white beard, the second Person of the Trinity as a chubby child, and the Holy Ghost as a dove in a nimbus. All this was endurable in the ages of faith — and of ignorance. Philosophy, and science to-day have made us conceive of a Universe infinitely more vast, more immaterial, and more immeasurable by any human standard of ours than was the Universe of Dante and Milton, of Bossuet and Wesley.

Whatever may be the Power — or Powers — that pervade this inscrutable Universe, the cultivated soul shrinks from dwarfing it — or them — to the cramped standard of anything that can be stated in terms of human thought. The epic Saga of Genesis is a grand poem. But we now should be ashamed to accept a cosmology so crude and barbarous. The poet tells us that God made man in His own image. In truth it was the poet who made God in man's own image. And the raw anthropomorphic mythology which seemed sublime to a tribe of Bedouins in the desert of Sinai, to the warriors and psalmists of Israel, has become repulsive to the trained and spiritual mind.

As we meditate on the inexhaustible mysteries presented by the Universe, the one thing from which we clearly shrink is any kind of denial whatever. To deny that this Universe has an Order of its own: — this, as Comte repeated, is the most foolish of all metaphysical dreams. The humanistic theology of Genesis is the real Atheism. Whatever creation may mean, it cannot be anything so gross, so earthly, so realistic, let us say frankly so grotesque as

that. A rational conception of the Universe lifts us up by ever higher flights of imagination, into far more spiritual realms of thought. The truly religious soul is ever filled with awe, wonder, humility, and reverence, as it contemplates the abysmal Majesty and Immensity — before which it can only bow down in silence and abasement of self.

We loathe and pity the mind which can plume itself on its denials and can air its idiotic Atheism. In presence of the Unutterable Majesty of the All in All, we will deny nothing. But alas! equally we can assert nothing. Or only this — that it is all unutterable, inconceivable, inexplicable by us; unknown to us, but conceivably not unknowable. To assert that it is unknown to us is to acknowledge our human weakness; to assert that it is absolutely unknowable, is to assert something about that of which we say we know nothing. When we say that we cannot conceive it, or explain it, or utter it, we state only that which is within our own consciousness. *WE* cannot solve the mystery. We shrink from asserting that there is no mystery to solve; that it can never be solved at all. We deny nothing, and we assert nothing. Who knows but that this Majestic Universe may be an unsubstantial vision of the brain, destined soon to fade away with our own fancy and leave not a wrack behind. Each mind may perchance fashion its own Universe:—each mind may be a Universe itself. Then were Creation a subjective hallucination of the human soul.

I hear some objector say: “In bowing down with reverence before the Majesty of the Universe, here at once is a theology of a kind; perhaps neither Biblical nor orthodox, but a sufficient basis whereon a complete theological religion may stand.” No! far from it. To recognise an inconceivable and inexplicable Majesty may be metaphysics,

perhaps even philosophy; it is certainly practical good sense. It is not, cannot be, religion. Metaphysics may rest content with Inconceivabilities and unthinkable Absolutes; religion can only rest on certainties, intelligible verities, passionate sympathies. Men and nations do not live or work and grow by being stuffed with dreams; nor do they learn to die for logical dilemmas and metaphysical conundrums. The biggest of all Great May-Be's can never be the true and living God.

The sense of an Ultimate Power within, behind, the inscrutable Universe is Metaphysics, not Religion. A bare intellectual postulate of thought may become an axiom of philosophy, but it is not a religious belief which can inspire the emotions and direct activities. It is no more a religion in itself, can be no more the root and key of religion (if anything effective over human life is meant by religion), than the scientific postulate of an ether, the undulatory theory of light, or the action and reaction of electrons. Mr. Herbert Spencer and his followers (if he has any since the loss of Mr. Auberon Herbert) persuade themselves that they believe in an "Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed," but which is the Ultimate Unknowable. Any of us may agree that this is nearly all we can conceive of the problem of Creation; but it carries us a very little way in dealing with what is the real problem — Providence, guiding and sustaining Man, and the moral conduct of Man's life on earth. Science and Philosophy in some three thousand years have vaporised the God of Abraham and Moses into an Unknowable Energy. And the reason why orthodox religion has now become a worn-out convention is, that religion persists in repeating the formulas of its ancient creed, even though what was once a living and familiar Person has been trans-

cidentalised into an Incomprehensible postulate of thought.

Having lost for ever the God of Abraham and Moses, of Bernard and À-Kempis, we must go back to find on this earth a Supreme Power with which we can feel to be in living touch, hour by hour; which stirs our human sympathies; for which we can dream of becoming an active agent, a working member, a real part. That was what religion meant in the ages when religion inspired human life. And religion will never again inspire human life until it has recovered the sense of a Supreme Power, akin to Man, an organic Being, within the range of our human understanding, and in magnetic touch with the human heart.

HUMANITY

The Supreme Power on this petty earth can be nothing else but the Humanity which, ever since fifty thousand — it may be one hundred and fifty thousand years, has slowly but inevitably conquered for itself the predominance of all living things on this earth, and the mastery of its material resources. It is the collective stream of Civilisation — often baffled, constantly misled, grievously sinning against itself from time to time, but in the end victorious; winning certainly no heaven, no millennium of the saints, but gradually over great epochs rising to a better and a better world.

This Humanity is not all the human beings that are or have been. It is a living, growing, and permanent Organism in itself, as Spencer and modern philosophy establish. It is the active stream of Human Civilisation, from which many drop out into that oblivion and nullity which is the true and only Hell. Like all organisms it is itself subject to laws of its own, is limited by its circumscribing

conditions, its *environment*, and has its own ministers and servants. It is not sublime like the Deity of the Pentateuch and the Psalms; but it is *real*, human, sympathetic. It is not Infinite, nor Omnipotent nor Perfect; but it is comprehensible and practical. Youth craves impossible satisfactions; a boy imagines for himself a splendid career, a girl dreams of an ideal lover. So, the youth of Man aspires to transcendent sublimities. The manhood of Man is content with simpler realities. It is said that Man is too small a race, this Earth too minute a home, to arouse enthusiasm and inspire devotion. It would be a craven soul indeed which should tell us that his mother was too ordinary a woman to love, his native place too petty to be remembered, this island of ours too small a land to awaken any fire of patriotism.

As the maturity of Humanity settles down to the hard invincible facts of life, it sees that it must take what it can get. Its conditions are not ideal, and it no longer wastes its strength in pursuit of unattainable ideals. It abandons the long search for the "philosopher's stone," for the alchemists' element, for the forecast of the Stars, for the elixir of life. It finds Physics and Chemistry less sublime, but more useful. It has to give up spiritual ecstasies and mystical effusions, as morbid extravagances. Religion ceases to be a tempest of introspective passion and hysterical exaltation. It inspires a more natural, sober, balanced form of practical resolution and the quiet fulfilment of mundane duties. The idea that there can be no real religion apart from these celestial dreams and artificial yearnings of soul is a fatal witness to that perversion of sense and manliness for which the Christian mystics have to answer, from the days of the Sermon on the Mount to the days of a Baptist revival.

But this need not be enlarged on now. The whole of this volume is a treatise on the various aspects and uses of Humanity as the central object of a working religion. Not of a religion as conceived by an Arab medicine-man in the desert or a monk in his desolate cell — and this is the type of religion conceived only by a fraction of the human race in comparatively recent ages — but of a religion more akin to the religion of patriotism, as conceived by a Leonidas, a Socrates, a Decius, a Marcus Aurelius — or by a Turgot, a Washington, a Condorcet. Patriotism, in modern as in ancient times, has often kindled the heroism of religious fervour. Fatherland has had martyrs as true and pure as ever had the Church. The religion of Humanity means a glorified patriotism purified from all trivial self-interest, so broadened that it is free from local rivalry, spiritualised to a sense of communion with an unfathomable Past and with an incalculable Future.

Now, a superficial view might suggest the objection that what was said above on the infinitesimal littleness of our planet and the petty span of the human race in the æons of living things, conflicted with the sense of Man being an object of honour and devotion. This would be to confuse the difference between the *relative* and the *absolute* point of view. The *relativity* of human knowledge and activity is the essential basis of sound philosophy and of efficient action. In one of his brilliant epigrams Auguste Comte said — “*Nothing is really absolute unless it be this very axiom.*” Absolutely, *in rerum natura*, Man is an insignificant speck in a boundless Universe, the bubble of a moment on the eternal ocean of Time. If we choose to speculate about the Universe, Infinity, Eternity, and Creation, or for purposes of physical science, Man is such a speck. But relatively, for purposes of history, civilisa-

tion, politics, morality, life — Man on this earth is supreme, the highest, best, wisest, strongest, of living things — lord of this world and master of the material forces it contains. Whether he be strong or weak, wise or foolish, good or bad, in an Infinite Universe, judged by a standard of Perfection — matters not. Here — on earth — for all practical purposes of human life, physical, intellectual, moral — he is not only first, but supreme — *Nec viget quidquam simile aut secundum.*

So long as the human race believed itself to be in direct touch with the Powers of the Universe — whether by a caste of Priests interpreting the will of Heaven, of Sun and Moon — by Revelation in Sacred Books — by the Incarnation of Deities, Heroes, or of the son of God — by the divine inspiration of a Confucius, a Buddha, a Mahomet, or again of Apostles, Fathers, and Saints — so long it was possible for rational beings to fix their aspirations on the world above and its invisible denizens and to find spiritual comfort and elevation therein. But when all belief in these beings faded away, and revelation, inspiration, and miraculous incarnations were found to be human dreams, and the divine beings to be inventions of the human imagination — then the only real Power left in which Man could faithfully believe, trust, and feel a practical inspiration was the Humanity to which he owed life and everything he valued and into which he might hope in the end to be absorbed. To the feeble, erring, ignorant individual man or woman, in the loneliness of self-pity and abasement, the Humanity which is the outcome of myriads of centuries of progressive civilisation is a truly gracious, Supreme, majestic Providence.

It is a pitiful sophism of the cynical apologists of orthodoxy, when we find them resorting to the sinister argument

that Man being so vile and so petty, he should console himself with the bare possibility of some supreme Incomprehensibility. Since we never can be certain of anything, they say, why need we discard a venerable hypothesis? Man is so abject a wretch in himself that a sublime "May-be" should bring him a little comfort. But this reasoning is suicidal. By all theological, and indeed philosophical tests, the human race is far the noblest fact of creation. The Bible assures us that man was created in the image of God; and the whole scheme of Salvation turns on the love of the Father for His own children and handiwork. What becomes of either the wisdom or the goodness of the Almighty, if the crown of His creative Omnipotence were such a contemptible failure? This is one of those ridiculous dilemmas into which absolute theology is wont to fall. The man who reviles Humanity on the ground of its small place in the scale of the Universe is the kind of man who sneers at patriotism and sees nothing great in England, on the ground that our island holds so small a place in the map of the world. On the Atlas England is but a dot. Morally and spiritually, our Fatherland is our glory, our cradle, and our grave.

FUTURE LIFE

One of the greatest boons which the teaching of Jesus and Paul conferred upon Man — perhaps the greatest ever conferred by any religion — was the opening to the Christian believer of a brighter world beyond the grave. Other forms of religion, though certainly not all, vaguely shadowed another world of some kind; but it was always a very dim world, and usually quite repulsive. The great religions of Egypt, China, and India and of barbarous

Fetichism were either stern or nihilist; and even the spiritual religion of Moses had nothing to tell of Heaven. But the Church in its promise of an immortality of bliss as the reward of a good life gave to human conduct a stimulus which till then had been quite unknown.

This great boon, however, was qualified by deep-seated evils which constantly neutralised its good and not seldom perverted it to atrocious ends. Mediæval imagination and Calvinist brutality monstrously exaggerated the terrors of Judgment and made Hell a gigantic torture-chamber—all of which caused as much suffering, and at least was as cruel as the rites of Moloch or the shambles of an African "Custom." The Mediæval and the Calvinist ideal of Futurity tormented many more than it consoled. And when the Catholic theology promised salvation in return for external acts and dying words, and Protestant theology promised salvation on the repetition of certain formulas of belief, the religious doctrine of immortality in Heaven did quite as much moral harm as good.

But in our age the whole question has entered on a new phase. For all practical purposes, and in the educated and thoughtful world, Hell and any kind of definite future punishment has ceased to be real. The Churches have allowed the ideal silently to fade away. The old notions of God's wrath and damnation, physical agonies, and an eternity of torture, have become so odious, even so ludicrous, to sensible men to-day, that the Churches have let Hell go by default. No attempt whatever has been made to replace Hell by any definite kind of penalty, nor to reform eternal punishment by any positive limit of time. The Protestant churches with their rejection of Purgatory are in greater dilemmas than the Catholic. Even Polytheism and Buddhism avoided the rigid antithesis of eternal

Bliss and everlasting Damnation. In truth, the old doctrine of Hell, Judgment, and future Punishment for sin, can hardly now be taken to be efficient theological forces at all.

But this dilemma ensues. If there be no future punishment for sin — or, at any rate, punishment of no definite kind, the nature and conditions of which are known — how can the hope of Heaven act as a moral stimulus to virtue? If there be no Hell, Heaven loses its ethical value. If we are all strict Universalists, and all men are to reach Heaven alike, the doctrine of Future Life ceases to have any appreciable effect upon Man's conduct here below. The doctrine, in the best of times, never had much effect. Now, it has practically none. The whole scheme of basing good and evil conduct upon *rewards* and *punishments* has not only broken down as obsolete, but it is felt by our modern morality to be immoral, degrading, and inhuman.

There remains to be considered the consoling hope of immortal bliss. The bereaved, the weary, the suffering cling to the thought of Heaven. But the sickening doubt is now spreading far and wide as to what is the sure ground of this hope. So long as it rested on Revelation, the authorised word of Scripture, of Church, of inspired Saints, the ground was sure. But when Scripture, Church, and Saints, simply come to mean what men of old used to think, the doctrine of Heaven is left in the air. And now the problem depends on solutions given by biology and by philosophy to the question — what does *life* mean in the dispersion of the physical organism and the supposed absence of any kind of material entity? For my part, I have no definite solution of the problem one way or the other. It depends on what we mean by *life*.

I confess that I do not understand what can be meant

by the continuance of our *human* and *conscious* life, or what we ordinarily mean by conscious life, in the absence of any conceivable organ of consciousness, as modern philosophy understands sound psychology. I am far from denying the possibility of such consciousness, but it is put in a language I fail to grasp. To me immortal life means the indefinite persistence of human activity. That is not a vague hope but a demonstrable certainty, as to which no trained mind can feel an hour's doubt. The orthodox idea of future life is a quicksand of vague possibilities; ours is an undeniable axiom of social science.

The Churches now are so ready to shuffle away the doctrine of the Resurrection of the body, along with Hell, physical torment and vicarious sacrifice, that it is too often forgotten that the resurrection of the body is the orthodox doctrine, formally stated in the Apostles' Creed, the Athanasian Creed, and in the *Epistle* of St. Paul. It is to be a "spiritual" body, whatever that may mean; but the term "body" must include some kind of personal similarity.

They who most heartily yearn for Heaven as a place where they will rejoin their lost loved ones never work out in any intelligible way what is meant by this hope. If they did, some strange results would follow. A young mother loses a beloved child, and as she lays flowers on its grave, prays that she may rejoin it above. Years pass; the mother has other children, perhaps another husband, in many cases a life of various experiences and energies. Half a century passes, and she "rejoins her child." Does she find the loved one a child, a man, a woman — with what spiritual experiences or thoughts? Are children transformed into grown men and women in Heaven; are the commonplace idealised into angels; do the young become old, the old young, or are all souls equally etherealised

into the conventional type, with sexless form and ample wings? If they are so etherealised, as we read in *Pilgrim's Progress*, how can they recognise each other? How can the aged mother see in this "shining one" with diaphanous robes her long-lost darling? Can it be the same being?

If in Heaven all souls are not etherealised into shining angels, but keep, if not the form, something of the moral substance that can be called *themselves*, how utterly the years of life that have passed since death severed them, must have transformed one or other, making them so different as hardly to understand each other! Unless the soul in Heaven retains enough of its own moral and spiritual *personality* to establish its own identity, how can those who knew and loved it on earth be said to rejoin it? Unless *personality* survives, what satisfaction can there be in meeting in Heaven beings who are no longer *themselves*, the loved ones as we knew them in the flesh? Yet, if *personality* remains, how unworthy of Paradise are all the petty, ordinary, human characteristics which identify every man and every woman in this sad, sinful world of ours? If souls of the Blessed retain those characteristics, Heaven would be a very poor Paradise. If they do not, they would remain strangers to each other, with all common sympathies destroyed.

Again, if something like *personality* be retained by the risen soul, what has this personality to do in Heaven other than singing Hymns? It is a low and almost puerile idea of Heaven which imagines it a place where the domestic virtues and the family affections can have full scope. Would not the mother in presence of the Throne, tuning her golden harp, have other work than to hold converse with the child of her own youth? Does not the idea of rejoining lost ones point to that family egoism and narrow domesticity

which too often in this world conflicts with any high sense of social duty and civic patriotism? Yes! the hope of renewing in Heaven the little "family circle" with all its idiosyncrasies and exclusiveness, is a somewhat sordid adjunct to the scheme of a Personal Salvation — which has been the opprobrium and the ruin of Christianity as an instrument of a true social morality.

Nor must it be forgotten how violent is the natural revulsion of feeling, when it is found that great expectations of happiness have been raised only to prove to be illusions in the end. The prophets and medicine-men, Mahdis and Fanatics, who promise their votaries immunity from death, disease, wounds, and defeat, were furiously attacked when the delusion is proved by bitter experience. When the brilliant promises of heavenly glory come to be thought baseless fancies, not only will all ethical uses of the doctrine of immortality be destroyed, but the shock caused to the entire scheme of orthodox theology will be deep and lasting.

The plea that Heavenly Bliss is so beautiful and so consoling an idea that it must be believed, is mere nursery nonsense. It would be still more beautiful and consoling to believe that we could, by prayer and fasting, achieve immortal life on earth, death being suppressed as an antique superstition. Or it would be consoling to believe that disease and pain could be extirpated by an act of will and the exercise of faith, as Christian Science assures us. In the absence of Revelation, the promises of orthodox Theology and of Christian Science, stand on the same footing — which footing is, that it would be pleasant if we could believe it.

Nor is there anything in the plea that the belief in a conscious future life has been universal in all races and in all ages. Even if this were true, it would prove nothing. To

wish for a thing is not to be able to attain it. A man might wish to fly in the air like a bird, or to dwell in the sea, like a fish; but wishing would not enable him to fly or to swim. The plea is not true. The larger part of the human race have had no idea of conscious personal survival after death. Buddhists make a heaven out of annihilation. There is not a word about Heaven in the Old Testament, as meaning a place where the good live again in bliss. The craving for such a future is an artificial — indeed a morbid — dream of Christian theologians, wholly unknown to the oldest part of the Bible.

We who desire to base our faith, not on shifting hypotheses but on scientific certainties, rest all our religious hope of a true future life on undoubted conclusions of solid knowledge. The great truth of a life beyond the grave is indeed one of the best possessions of Man, the foundation of all noble living and working on earth. When Paul first preached it in that sublime song of triumph over death, which has so often thrilled us to the marrow as we stood round the confined dead, he gave the human race a new and imperishable hope, to last whilst this planet endures. It was one of the most decisive steps ever made by human imagination in the evolution of religion — as creative perhaps as the consolidation of a company of miscellaneous deities into the conception of one supreme All-father. Let us cherish and hold fast this glad tidings of good things.

But in order that Paul's magnificent Utopia may be kept alive, in an age of rational philosophy it must be recast in scientific form. The reasoning on which the Apostle placed his promise is rather fanciful than convincing. He makes the resurrection to life in Christ the correlative of general death in Adam — an argument which to-day has a very dubious force, now that Adam means only a type

or myth; now that death in Adam has grown to be a repulsive absurdity. There can be no abiding and ever-present sense of the profound importance to every human soul of a real survival after death, unless it be concentrated on the certain fact of the indelible reaction upon our fellow-beings of each human life on earth. This certain truth does not necessarily conflict with transcendental hypotheses of celestial glory — but it is too often entirely crushed out and paralysed by vague imaginations of supernatural bliss. The practical effect of dwelling in thought on this imaginary bliss too often produces a stolid indifference to life on earth — a contempt for even a good and useful career here below — a sentiment as immoral as it is anti-social. We may cherish fantastic dreams of spiritual immortality till they end in sacrificing real life in the flesh. If the grand truth of Immortality is to nourish in us a good life on earth, it must be brought into touch with the active life of men and women here below.

II

DAY OF ALL THE DEAD

1881

An address given at Newton Hall, 31st December 1881, on the celebration of the "Day of the Dead," when the poem by George Eliot — "Oh may I join the choir invisible!" — was set as a Cantata, for voices and chorus. The Music by Henry Holmes of the Royal College of Music.

WE meet, as we are wont to meet, on this the last day of the year, in the spirit of grateful remembrance of those who have gone before us on the earth. It is a meeting, to share in which, needs no particular phase of belief; a practice in which there is nothing of an exclusive kind, nothing critical or negative; one in which all serious men can join us without a sense of anything strange, and without sacrificing anything that they hold sacred themselves. Nor is there anything about this occasion of artificial and studied gloom. We do not sorrow as those who have no hope. We rather rejoice in a sober and manly way, with humane and grateful remembrance of those who through all the past ages in their deaths have left us their lives, and on this night of all the year especially, it is natural to face the eternal problem — What are the Dead to the living, and what are the living to the Dead?

Poetry, the spontaneous instinct of mankind, and the

rites of not a few religious communions, have found a common ground in this association of the last hours of the year with that great host of the majority — into the ranks of which we are hastening so swiftly. The year is dying in the night. The bells from a thousand steeples are about to ring in the new year. The most frivolous amongst us can pause in his merriment, and trust that there may one day be heard the bells that shall ring in the larger heart, the kindlier hand. The gatherings around us of families and old friends, the churches filling for some midnight service, the echoes through our brain of so many a noble passage from the poets — all are in harmony with our thoughts. The faith, which in this Hall we meet with a view of understanding better, but adds some breath, and depth, and glow, as I think, to this old-world sentiment and practice. It reminds me always — this close of the year — so much akin to the close of the day and of life, of those words of Dante, whose pensive face looks down on us to-night, where he says in what are, I often fancy, some of the most touching lines in the whole range of poetry: —

Era gia l' ora che volge il disio
 Ai naviganti, ed intenerisce il cuore
 Lo di ch' han detto ai dolci amici addio:
 E che lo nuovo peregrin d' amore
 Punge, se ode squilla di lontano,
 Che paia il giorno pianger che si muore.

Now was the hour that wakens fond desire
 In men at sea, and melts their thoughtful heart,
 Who in the morn have bid sweet friends farewell.
 The pilgrim newly on his road with love
 Thrills, if he hear the vesper bell from far,
 That seems to mourn for the expiring day.

But our thoughts in this place are occupied with some-

thing more than vague poetic sentiment. They are filled with a conception which is precise, philosophic, and rich in fruitful suggestion. It is a conception as real and human on the one side, as it is boundless and inspiring on the other. It is a conception which disturbs no faith, shocks no sentiment, arouses no controversy, and is entirely in accord with all profound thoughts and all generous feelings which we meet with in the world. It has never been seriously denied, and it is hardly capable of logical refutation. It has long coloured the ideas of philosophers, moralists, and poets — but it has been made an organic and living truth only in our own generation. St. Paul had a vision of it when he said, We are every one members one of another. Pascal saw it when he said, “The generations of men should be regarded as the life of one man ever enduring and ever learning.” Shelley had a sense of it when he said :—

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul.

It is a conception of two kindred aspects :— the first, is the indefinite persistence throughout human life of all thoughts, acts, and feelings, however remote in time; the second is, the mysterious and boundless extent to which all human actions and ideas affect the living, transfuse and colour the Present, until they are absorbed in the ocean of the Past and thus join in the end to mould the Future.

All serious thought about life and about history has long been familiar with the idea of a regular sequence in the ages; and the earliest meditations about mankind have started with the idea that man is a social being. But the great philosophic discovery of this century has been the proof of the reality of organic laws in man's life, the full maturity of that idea which our English philosopher

has made familiar to us under the name of the Social Organism. Under the impulse of that potent idea, an idea which has passed into the fibre of modern thought, marvellous vitality has been given to our old and cruder ideas about Society and about the Past. In lieu of a pale and mechanical sequence of epochs, we see Mankind living through the ages just as the Man lives through moments and hours of his life — the child is the father of the Man — our ancestors are but the childish years of our race — our distant descendants will be but the maturity of the life that we are all living to-day. We see our generation of contemporaries, not working together like the ants in their nest or the bees in their hive by mechanical methods, but acting and reacting on each other like the tissues and nerves of the living organism, for ever receiving and shedding on each other subtle pulsations of heart, intellect, and will; more potently and more rapidly than the brain can act on the finger, or the heart send a glow to the eye or the brow.

Follow out this clear and triumphant truth into all its consequences of action and of feeling — draw it out from the closet of the thinker and make it ever present in our lives — treat it no more as a truth of philosophy but make it the mainspring of duty and of hope, and we have what we call our positive belief in its fulness. See the Dead, not in their mortal part, as laid to their rest, but living around us and in us, active and revered as they never were in life. Hear their voices, not in the hollow echoes of the tomb, but at our firesides, and in the good and pure words of every worthy man around us, in the swelling record of science, art, poetry, philosophy, and morals; in all that forms our mental and moral food, in “whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely.”

Let us dwell on this idea till it grows familiar to us as a household word; let us cultivate all the wealth of feeling which it is able to inspire. And we shall come to feel the collective might of the past surrounding us like an atmosphere, training us like a parent, and ministering to every want of brain and activity. They no more overpower our personal life, those who have gone before, than the notion of Providence in any creed overpowers the individual soul; they create us and enable us to create what we leave of permanent behind us. Turn to the great spirits whose images surround us in this place. Each day of every week which governs our daily business recalls the work of Moses and the Hebrew race. Blot out Homer and what would Greece be, or Poetry be? Blot out Archimedes and Aristotle, and Science and Philosophy are left in the air without foundation or axiom. Cæsar is to this day, after nineteen centuries, in many languages the word for Sovereign. St. Paul means to us the extension of the Gospel of Christ to all nations and people. Who could conceive modern history without Charlemagne, or modern poetry without Dante and Shakespeare? Gutenberg has transformed our lives, as completely as modern Europe has been recast by the work of Frederick; or as modern philosophy is based on Descartes, and modern Biology on the analyses of Bichat. And, as Newton brought the light into Nature and Nature's laws, so has Comte brought light upon Man and the laws of Man.

There are in our Calendar of great men 558 names, of all of whom the same thing is true in a certain degree. The continuance of their works and lives in us is true of 5000, of 50,000 men. It is true of every just and worthy life that has ever been passed on this earth. It is true, not of every life alone, but of every hour, and every act of every

life. The kindly word, the clear thought, the brave resolve, does not end and die with itself, does not die with the body which it animated, with the life of which it was the expression. For good or for evil the inevitable chain is set in motion. By every word we have spoken, by every act we have done, we have helped to accomplish some decision, to clear a problem, to form a character, to strengthen or to weaken some brother or sister. I know not what recording angel may have written them in the book of life, or the book of death; but I know that the least of our words and our thoughts has its own inevitable sequence, *must* act on brain and heart and will of others, and so must pass into the immense consensus of human life. It may be good and great, it may be slight or infinitesimal, but it is always there; and civilisation itself is made up of these infinite drops. As every flake of snow that falls on the crest of Mont Blanc passes on from glacier to rill and thence to river, till it falls a drop into the sea, so does every life and every act of every life contribute to the sum of Humanity.

It is impossible (when we come to think it over) to gain-say this truth, or to doubt its importance and its meaning; but our conventional habits of mind are wont to neglect it, to obscure it. We are wont to imagine that if the balance of our life be good, the particular acts and circumstances of life are matter of small importance; we are prone to regard an eternity of heaven as so different from our transitory life on earth, that after death this earth will concern us as little as the dragon-fly is concerned with the sheath out of which he has escaped into the sunlight. It is not so. Whatever may await us beyond our earthly life, and of that we will assert nothing and deny nothing, our earthly life is in one sense a living and continuing force on earth;

it is at least as eternal as human life of any sort ; it *must* concern us wherever we are, and whatever we may find behind the veil. For we can no more cast it off in death than we can in life ; we can no more cease to be responsible for it, than we can cease to be responsible for a falsehood which we have devised, or for an act of wrong that we have promoted ; no more than Gutenberg could cease to be responsible for the art of Printing, or Shakespeare for Hamlet, or Raphael for his Madonna, who looks down on us to-night as calmly and as sweetly as she looked first on the painter three centuries and a half ago.

Here is common ground where the believers in every creed and the believers in no creed can all alike meet. Whatsoever else we hope or fear, whatever kind of connection we suppose to exist between a future and a present life, no one can doubt the reality of life on earth, the certain truth that it is continued as a force amongst the living. To deny this is to deny that civilisation is a continuous thing, or that England has a history and a national life. We ask no one to surrender any jot of belief or of hope that he cherishes, when we ask him to give fuller expression to this truth. We have all been too apt to associate the memory of great men with the idea of fame, and too little with the idea of our gratitude to them, and their immense bounty to us. Shakespeare, Raphael, Dante, St. Paul, Homer, and Moses, fill our lives and enable us to think, to live, to enjoy, to love better, hour by hour. And we have been too apt to associate the memory of the men of the past with the great men alone, and to associate the dead, both men and women of all kinds, with something that is remote, closed, gone and buried, having no touch or portion in our world, no common life with us.

It is not so. Whatever else may be theirs, they are all

with us, around us, in us, — *all* of them, but the worthless and the evil, whose worthlessness and evil does truly die away in the tide of progress and of good, like the back eddy overborne by a rushing river; they are all still here in influence, and practical effect on our lives, in working harmony with us. They are *all* with us; and that is the meaning of our special meditations to-night. Throughout the year in our Calendar day by day we recall some great and useful soldier in the great army of human progress. But these men and women of great mark and name are but representatives and types of the whole. The infinite host of those who have done their duty since the day when the last saurian and megatherium left this planet clear for Man, since the days of the Cave men, since the Bone Age and the Stone Age began, the infinite host which over all these continents and throughout all the seas which girdle our earth have built up slowly the world of modern Man, this vast assemblage is too great for our imagination to grasp.

But though we cannot think without types and representatives, we must remember that we really mean *all*. It is not the men of might and genius alone whose work has made us what we are as a race to-day. It is the rank and file in the army. Personally each of us owes most to those who are nearest to us in birth, and in fellowship, often the least conspicuous or the least gifted of men and women; — our parents, and grandparents, our teachers, and fellow-workers, friends and companions, from whose help we have got strength, by whose patience we have been served, trained, and formed. They are with us, in a way, and working in us in a measure, to the third and fourth generation, to the thirtieth and fortieth generation. And their ceasing to breathe, and meet us and talk with us in the flesh, has no more destroyed the reality of their social and

human influence than the husband and wife, parent and child, the friend, the teacher, the partner, the servant, cease to have living relations the one with the other when they are separated in space and do not visibly exchange communication. We live by one another — and therefore we live again in one another and quite as much after death, as before it, and often very much more after it.

It has been too much the habit of those who would keep green the memory of our ancestors, whether under the spirit of religion, or patriotism, or intellectual interests, to single out some kind of greatness, some type of character, some age or some race. The Catholic Calendar contains none but Saints and Martyrs; our national acts and places of commemoration concern our own heroes only; the men of science are busy about the centenaries of discoveries; the men of Art about those of artists. Let us put aside all kinds of limitation. Let us honour the great and holy spirits of every religion that was worthy of the name. Let us remember all the Saints, the saints of every pure and honest life, the saints of poetry like Milton and Goethe, the saints of Art like Giotto and Mozart, the saints of politics like William the Silent and George Washington, of industry like Watt, of science like Priestley. Let us remember the martyrs of thought like Galileo, Lavoisier, and Condorcet, the martyrs of discovery like Cook, of government like Henry of Navarre.

There were heroes who have lived and worked in an unknown cottage and in an unvisited cell. There have been toilers, and thinkers, and poets, and statesmen unnumbered, to whose dying eyes almost everything they laboured for must have seemed to be in vain, as it was with Copernicus, and Condorcet, and Priestley. Or like Hildebrand, Cromwell, and Turgot, they could watch

the fruit of their hopes and their labours crumbling into ruins before their eyes were dim. Let us lay them all side by side in honoured memories, the believers in every wholesome creed, the founders of every just cause, the loving hearts, and stout wills of every race and every age. Let us lay in one monument the lion-heart of Richard and the chivalry of Saladin, Scipio and Hannibal, Richelieu and Cromwell, Hume and Kant. Let us go back far into the past, and far over the planet we possess. And so build up a temple in the eye of the spirit which, as a cenotaph, shall contain the shrines of Buddha and Confucius, along with those of St. Bernard and Moses; where Isaiah and Zoroaster, Æschylus, and Pythagoras, Archimedes, and Cæsar shall have a like honour and an equal place — a place where their services to our common progress are all in all — and their creed, their skin, their epoch, their visible triumphs and their fame, are no longer of any account at all.

But I pause here — for words fail me to give an idea of that boundless and overmastering multitude of lives which the thought of the Past awakens. The dull monotony of prose does no sort of justice to our feelings. To express the emotions which this vision inspires in our souls we must resort to the concentrated resources of Art — to Poetry, to Vocal Music. We will turn to relieve the tide of feeling in our hearts to those verses of one of the greatest creators in the world of imagination whom our own generation has known. She was the friend of myself and of many of us who meet in this Hall; she assisted us in our movement; the world knows perfectly that she was in profound and perhaps in growing sympathy with it, but that there was very much in Auguste Comte from which her reason entirely stood aloof. But in his conception of the filiation of all human truth, work, and beauty, she

was wholly with us in brain as much as in heart. She wrote this poem saturated with the thoughts which have filled our minds to-night — how the life of each of us revives and lives again in the lives that come after, how the great consensus of all lives is steadily making for good.

This poem then is no mere idle work of the poet's fancy, a passing mood of thought which conjured up the dreams of a spirit but little akin to her own. It expresses (as I know from long and frequent intercourse) the profoundest thought and hope of the poet. It is greater perhaps in conception than in form, and perhaps the conception itself is too vast and intense for any form. But it expresses the inmost belief of her great brain. I heard these words uttered over her coffin when we laid her body to rest in the grave, and they seemed as we listened to them then as if they issued direct from her cold lips and her silent heart. But as prose fails to express the torrent of emotion this idea calls up — even so does poetry fall short. And we must resort to Music, where the very indefiniteness of the Art can the better clothe an almost infinite idea. Our friend Mr. Holmes has pondered on these majestic lines, on the yet more majestic thoughts they enshrine, and he has given them by the power of his own beautiful art, a new and completer form.

Let us seek then by thought, by poetry, by voice, by instrument, to bring home to our spirits this transcendent idea. And as we do so, she who wrote these verses and he, who first conceived the idea that inspired them, will be living to-night in us, bringing with them to our hearts all the company of the good and great in all ages and nations of our earth. We shall feel the comfort and the inspiration of their spirits. We shall see them and hear them as they

join the choir invisible,
Whose music is the gladness of the world.

III

SEPTEM CONTRA FIDEM

1860

Here follows the Article entitled "Neo-Christianity," contributed by me to the "Westminster Review," N. S. No. xxxvi. October 1860. It has never been reprinted. But the reissue of Mr. Jowett's Theological Essays by Professor Campbell, his biographer, and also the revival on all sides of Biblical controversies, seem to make its republication most timely, and certainly a necessary part of the religious inquiry contained in this volume, as described supra p. 26.

Essays and Reviews. Second Edition. London:
J. W. Parker and Son. 1860.

A BOOK has appeared which may serve to mark an epoch in the history of opinion. The latest phase of religion at length has developed its creed. The vigour and the candour of this volume would raise it above the dust of theological strife; but its origin gives it a place in the record of religious thought. The subject, the form, and the authorship are all alike significant. It is no work of a single or isolated thinker; nor of unconnected thoughts upon secondary questions. It is the combined work of several of the leaders of thought in our seminaries of religious and useful learning; and it deals (not without some method) with the central topic in which

all religious inquiry is now summed up. In a word, it is a manifesto from a body of kindred or associated thinkers; if it be not rather an outline of the principles of a new school of English theology. But whatever be the intention of its authors, those who watch the progress of opinion must look upon its appearance, and still more upon its reception, as full of significance and instruction. When seven theologians, teachers and professors in our universities or schools, combine their strength to deal with the great questions of modern inquiry, the public may justly infer that it has a test of the progress of ideas within the pale of the Church.

We propose, then, to consider this book, not as if it were the work of one anonymous author, alone responsible for his opinions, but as fairly representing the ideas of a large body of the more vigorous minds within the Church. On the other hand, we must decide how far the solutions here offered satisfy the unfettered judgment; how far they possess the elements of fruitful and healthy growth. This "Review" at any rate ought not to be silent whilst so much courage and candour call for recognition and support. Nor can we lose the opportunity of insisting on this conspicuous triumph of the principle of free discussion. On the other hand, we should be wanting to our readers if we failed to point out the light which it throws on the position of official belief. When axioms of science and results of criticism, principles and theories for which we have long contended, are preached in the citadels of orthodoxy, we may welcome and proclaim the fact, whilst insisting that they be frankly adopted and pushed to their legitimate conclusions.

We speak of this book as a joint production, and not as a mere collection of essays; for such, notwithstanding its outward form, it undoubtedly is. We are quite aware that there is no formal connection in the argument; and we read

in the preface that it has been written without concert or comparison. But it cannot escape the most casual reader — first, that there is a virtual unity in the purpose of the whole; secondly, that each writer receives a weight and an authority from all the rest of his associates. Of the seven essays, four are wholly occupied in treating of the authority or value of Scripture; two of the other three deal chiefly with the same topic. A book like this is not a collection of pamphlets bound up into one volume; or the farrago of a few kindred minds. It would be equally idle to pretend that each writer is not morally responsible for the general tendency of the whole. We do not indeed suppose that each adopts the particular arguments or the statements of his associates — that Dr. Temple tells his boys that a portion of the Bible is “a late legend founded on a misconception” — or that Mr. Pattison is ever kindled into poetry by the genius of Bunsen. But each writer gives to the other an imprimatur of peculiar significance. It is in theological argument especially that this kind of sanction has peculiar force. And thus what each of the seven writers puts forward comes with increased power when it has the countenance of the other six. They at the very least are guarantees that the views contained in this book have in them nothing dangerous, insidious, or destructive. They at least bear witness that such opinions are an open question, and may be boldly avowed and usefully taught within the very precinct and sanctuary of the Church. Oxford and Cambridge, by some of their foremost teachers, proclaim this doctrine. It is for them to repudiate it if they think fit. They have not repudiated or ignored it. They have studied, pondered, and approved it.

If, again, we speak of this book as aggressive, we do so advisedly. No fair mind can close this volume without feeling it to be at bottom in direct antagonism to the whole system

of popular belief. They profess, indeed, to come forward as defenders of the creeds against attacks from without; but their hardest blows fall not on the assaulting, but on the resisting force. They throw themselves into the breach; but their principal care is to clear it from its oldest and stoutest defenders. In object, in spirit, and in method, in details no less than in general design — this book is incompatible with the religious belief of the mass of the Christian public, and the broad principles on which the Protestantism of Englishmen rests. The most elaborate reasoning to prove that they are in harmony can never be anything but futile and ends in becoming insincere. All attempts to show that these opinions are in accordance with Scripture, the Articles, the Liturgy, or the Church have little practical value, and do no small practical harm. Such reasoning may ease the conscience of troubled inquirers; but is powerless to persuade the mass that *that* is after all the true meaning of that which they have been taught and have believed. Just as their instinct repudiated the ingenious attempts of the Tractarian writers to build a semi-Romish system on the dogmas of our Church; just so it will revolt from any attempt, however sincere, to graft the results and the principles of rationalism on the popular Christianity of the day.

Is the crumbling edifice of orthodoxy to be supported by sweeping away the whole of its substructure; and Christian divines taught cheerfully to surrender all that the most exacting criticism assails? The mass of ordinary believers may well ask to be protected from such friends, as their worst and most dangerous enemies. Is it reasonable to suppose, that at this time of day the Christian world will consent to reconsider the whole of its positions; to develop its cardinal doctrines into new forms, and to remodel the whole structure of belief upon an improved theory? Will the complicated

and time-worn mechanism bear so radical a repair? Can its pieces be reset and placed in new relations, and the rusted mediæval time-piece be restored into the shape of a modern watch? Has it been all a mistaken rendering that men have been believing so long? Is theology then due to a mere confusion of terms? Can religion be set right by sounder canons of interpretation, and the mystery of the unknown cleared up by a more accurate scholarship? Of one thing we may be quite sure, that the public can never be persuaded to make trial of the process. They, at any rate, will never be brought to believe that the Bible is full of errors, or rather untruths; that it does not contain authentic or even contemporary records of facts, and is a medley of late compilers — and yet withal remains the Book of Life, the great source of revealed truth, the standard of holiness, purity, and wisdom. Yet all this our Essayists call upon them to admit, in the very name of Revelation and for the honour and glory of the Bible itself. Let our authors beware of such excessive candour, and rest assured that when the public once begin to read their Bibles in that spirit, they will soon cease to read them at all, and that the Hebrew Scriptures will take their place upon the bookshelf of the learned, beside the Arabian and the Sanscrit poets.

Nor again is it a more hopeful scheme to preach to the congregations in Church and Chapel, that the central notions of their creed, no less than the volume on which they are based, have been utterly misinterpreted and distorted; yet withal that the creeds must regain their influence under new forms, as the Scriptures, through their new expounders. The men and women around us are told that the whole scheme of salvation has to be entirely rearranged and altered. Divine rewards and punishments; the Fall; original Sin; the vicarious Penalty; and Salvation by faith are all, in the natural sense of the terms, repudiated as immoral delusions. Mir-

acles, inspiration, and prophecy, in their plain and natural sense, are denounced as figments or exploded blunders. The Mosaic history dissolves into a mass of ill-digested legends, the Mosaic ritual into an Oriental system of priest-craft, and the Mosaic origin of the earth and man sinks amidst the rubbish of rabbinical cosmogonies.

And yet all this is done in the name of orthodoxy, and for the glory of Christian truth. Nay, unwearied with destroying this great edifice of old belief, our writers enter upon the gigantic and incredible enterprise of rebuilding the whole again from its foundations, upon the same ground-plan but with stronger walls; and after forcing the simple believer to unlearn his well-conned creed, they sit down to teach it to him anew with altered words and remodelled phrases. An expurgated Bible resumes its place. Miracles, inspiration, and prophecy reappear under the old names with new meanings: the harmonious whole arises a new in loftier and softer outlines with the cardinal features—with a revised Atonement, a transcendental Fall, a practical Salvation, and an idealised Damnation.

What consolation can it be to the simple believer to be told that this inversion of his whole creed is all within the letter of the Articles, and the Liturgy, and the Scripture? All the bases of his creed are undermined; the whole external authority on which it rests is swept away; the mysterious book of truth fades into an old collection of poetry and legend; and the scheme of Redemption in which he has been taught to live and die turns out to be a demoralising invention of men. And yet all this is done to him to strengthen his Christianity, to confirm him as a member of the Church, to give a moral power to his faith, to teach him the true spirit of the Gospel. It is done unto him not by the open foes with whom he has long waged unequal battle to the simple watchwords of

“No human reason,” “The region of faith,” and so forth; but it is done unto him by doctors, professors, and divines, by those who breed up Churchmen and clergymen — by men who teach those who teach him and his children. We can well imagine the bitterness of heart with which he must repudiate this system of cure. His mental constitution cannot bear so terrific a remedy. They may demonstrate the Scientific necessity of the operation they propose; but what if he feel certain of dying under their knives? Old and infirm as he is, they would restore him in a Medean caldron. “Mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted hath lifted up his heel against me.”

We are quite aware that this purpose is not the conscious intention of the several writers in this book. It is quite possible that it may not be that of any one of them. But it most assuredly is the spirit of the book itself. We are dealing now, not with the individual writers, but with their book. We are quite aware of broad distinctions between them. Some of them may shrink from going so far in the work of destruction; and some, perhaps, have no desire to go so far in reconstruction. But these seven authors are responsible for the book, and the book is responsible for the general impression it creates. Each workman may single out a separate portion of the whole edifice of orthodoxy to undergo the process of demolition and repair; but he could hardly complain if the whole body are supposed to be together pulling down the whole.

If one essay in this volume repudiates any kind of miracle, another any kind of inspiration, another shows the cosmogony to be an undisguised invention, and another deals with the Bible as Niebuhr dealt with Livy; is it too much to say that a book has appeared which at once repudiates miracles, inspiration, Mosaic history, and the authenticity of the Bible?

Surely, too, these writers must know that it is in theology that the catenary argument is so peculiarly untrustworthy. A chain of theological reasoning of all other chains is no stronger than its weakest part. What becomes of the Christian scheme when the origin of man is handed over to Mr. Darwin; and Adam and Eve take their seats beside Deucalion and Pyrrha? Of what use can it be to talk of articles and liturgy or of creeds to a Protestant Church which has been robbed of the written Word from which they are all deduced?

Again, not merely must each be supposed to support the words of those who mount the same pulpit as himself, but much less than explicit statements do their work when they fall from men in their position. An English divine must be in spite of himself an apologist, and must be always regarded as stating his case most favourably to the Church; an Oxford professor must sanction revolt when he speaks of disbelief with such amazing candour. When he speaks of the supernatural with such contempt, can he wonder if men ask themselves what is Christianity wholly divested of the supernatural? and if he speaks systematically of the very "Head of his Church" in the actual language of an Unitarian divine, does he expect his young followers to pause on the inevitable conclusion? Let each of these writers reflect how far in all theological reasoning the moral sanction of the reasoner must work. When a pious and learned divine, shaking his head, bewails some doubts he feels as to the truth of Scripture, his less deliberate hearers soon cease to have any doubts at all. There are some questions which, if left for a short space open, will shortly decide themselves; and creeds, like Cæsar's wife, cannot even bear to be suspected. Let each of these writers be assured that as far as moral influence goes, he has said all that each of the others has said, and it is not too hard to

remind them, that each has implied some things which none of them have said.

Let us suppose that this was the case of political discussion. Let us imagine that seven writers had published a volume upon the British Constitution. Suppose that each of them treated it as ready for an entire transformation and development. Suppose that one of these writers proved that Magna Charta was the work of an age long subsequent to King John; that the Bill of Rights had been systematically mutilated; that the whole Statute-book had been hopelessly interpolated and corrupted. Suppose that another regarded the whole principle of government by Kings, Lords, and Commons as a misconception of Blackstone and De Lolme; that another attacked the system of balances and checks as a demoralising invention, and that the maxim of *Salus populi suprema lex* was demonstrated to be the essence of the Constitution, which could not possibly contradict anything that political science might establish. Suppose that the mere existence of the House of Lords was treated as an open question; and the Head of the State himself spoken of in words which imply a popular Magistrate rather than an hereditary King.

Would such writers be heard to say that they had written "independently and without concert and comparison"; would it avail them to profess themselves true friends of the Constitution, defenders of our old institutions and conservative reformers? Would it be worth their while to prove that such views were grounded on sounder canons of interpretation of the old Norman French or Latin of our statutes, and microscopic discoveries in the charred fragments of the Charta? Lastly, and what is of far more importance, could such writers seriously expect that the public would ever come to adopt this new reading of their laws; and that their con-

ventional respect for the old would be thereby fanned into devotion to the new Constitution? Such men would be justly looked on as working towards a social and political Revolution, and such language would be regarded, from whatever tongue it came, as a sign of decay or disease in the State. But if it were heard from the lips of Privy Councillors, Ministers, and Statesmen, in the Senate and the Court, without answer or rebuke, he would be an observer of strange dulness or strange subtlety who should doubt that it portended a revolution in the State — a change, it might be peaceful, but unquestionably enormous.

Who are the teachers from whom this language comes? They are the pride, the directors, and the representatives of our ecclesiastical foundations. The first essay in this volume is contributed by Dr. Temple, once known as fellow and tutor of Balliol College, Oxford, subsequently as the head of a training college for schoolmasters, and who as the head of the most influential school in the kingdom, now sits in the chair of Dr. Arnold, and may one day sit on the episcopal throne of Dr. Tait. Few men possess in Oxford a higher credit or influence, and none have with more success put themselves at the head of all its most liberal action. The second essay is by Dr. Williams, a well-known tutor at Cambridge, who is now vice-principal of a training college for the priesthood, and thus adds to the character of vicar, that of an educator of the clergy. The third essay is by the late Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford, in whose too early death the University deploras the loss of one of her very ablest and most learned sons — one who carried sound science and vigorous thinking into the very centre of a literary and traditional sphere; whose numerous writings found a large and attentive audience; whose many friends remain to perpetuate his memory and work. The author of the fourth essay, Mr.

Wilson, adds to the character of an active clergyman that of one who has exercised the most powerful influence upon the intellect of Oxford. Chosen to deliver the Bampton Lectures, he produced a sensation still fresh in the memory, and implanted ideas which still live and work throughout the University. Chosen as Public Examiner, he was one of those who, with the last two essayists, gave the strongest impulse to its studies. The next essay is by Mr. Goodwin, a layman, but not the less distinguished for his philological and Biblical studies. The authors of the sixth and the seventh essays, Mr. Pattison and Mr. Jowett, have for years been mainly responsible for the education of their respective colleges. Both have been surpassed by few in the influence they have exercised over pupils and colleagues, and the part they have had in the action and progress of Oxford studies. Indeed as the foremost man of the foremost college, as possessing widespread personal influence, as the friend and guide of most of the ablest of the younger students, Mr. Jowett, the Regius Professor of Greek, might well be taken as the chief and the mouthpiece of all the fresher and younger intellect of Oxford.

That the picture we have sketched of the contents of this volume is by no means overdrawn can easily be shown. With the principles and tendencies of the several essays we shall presently deal. We will, however, at once collect some of those statements scattered throughout the book, which place it in our judgment in radical antagonism to the whole system of popular belief. The first essay strikes as it were the keynote of the whole by reducing the teaching of the Hebrews to the level of that of Greece and Rome, each of which had "systems of law given also by God, though not by revelation" (p. 15). Its chief results are simply "the idea of monotheism and the principle of purity" (p. 13), a view which, we think,

was earlier advanced by Mr. Francis Newman. The theory is adopted from Auguste Comte, without acknowledgment and possibly unconsciously, "that the human race is a colossal man," and "the creeds and doctrines, the opinions and principles of the successive ages, are his thoughts" (p. 3). That the details of the Mosaic ritual should be sanctioned by Divine authority, "is utterly irreconcilable with our present feelings" (p. 8).

Nor does the Christian dispensation fare much better than the Mosaic, for we learn that "had His revelation been delayed till now, assuredly it would have been hard for us to recognise His Divinity" (p. 24). The creeds "were evolved" by the Church (p. 40), which occupied six centuries "in the creation of a theology" (p. 43), but a number of these decisions "are practically obsolete" (p. 41), and "we may acknowledge the great value of the forms in which the first ages of the Church defined the truth, and yet refuse to be bound by them" (p. 44). Nor is Dr. Temple's submission to the Bible greater than to the creeds, by means of "the principle of private judgment, which puts conscience between us and the Bible, making conscience the supreme interpreter whom it may be a duty to enlighten, but whom it can never be a duty to disobey" (p. 45); so that if the Bible says, "As in Adam all die," and conscience revolts from such a sentence, conscience and not the Bible must be listened to. Are we to deal as freely with the second clause of this famous verse? After such a theory of interpretation of a Book of which it is admitted the narratives contain "occasional inaccuracy, interpolations, and forgeries" (p. 47), it does seem strange to be told that "the immediate work of our day is the study of the Bible" (p. 48), to the utter exclusion of all "the other systems of law equally given by God."

The second essay subjects the Hebrew annals to the same

“remorseless criticism” with which Gentile histories have been dealt. The words are put into the mouth of Bunsen; and Teucer discharges his arrows beneath the shield of Ajax. We are to notice “how nearly the ancient cosmogonies approach the philosophy of Moses” (p. 56), the half ideal, half traditional notices of the beginnings of our race “compiled in Genesis” (p. 56), and how the long lives of the first patriarchs are relegated “to the domain of legend or of symbolical cycle” (p. 57). The Exodus is historically accounted for “in connection with the rise and fall of great empires” (p. 58), and “the avenger who slew the first-born may have been the Bedouin host” (p. 59). The passage of the Red Sea “may be interpreted with the latitude of poetry” (p. 59), “and the numbers of the Book of Judges most suspiciously proceed by the eastern round number of forty” (p. 59). As to the Pentateuch, “numerous fragments of genealogy, of chronicle, and of spiritual song go up to a high antiquity, but are embedded in a crust of later narrative, the allusions of which betray at least a time when kings were established in Israel” (p. 60). It is indicated “that there was a Bible before our Bible, and that some of our present books, as certainly Genesis and Joshua, and perhaps Job, Jonah, and Daniel, are expanded from simpler elements” (p. 62).

Nor are the prophets exempt from the same criticism, — “even Butler foresaw the possibility that every prophecy in the Old Testament might have its elucidation in contemporaneous history” (p. 65). The Messianic predictions are ruthlessly eliminated. The maiden’s child, in Isa. vii. 16, is to be born in the reign of Ahaz (p. 69); the Hebrew word for Mighty God perhaps means only mighty or strong one; and the famous prophecy of Isa. lii. and liii., “He is despised and rejected of men,” etc., refers not to the Messiah, but to the Prophet Jeremiah (p. 72). The author of portions of Isaiah

is the apocryphal Baruch, to whom also is due "a recasting of Job and of parts of other books" (p. 75); the book of Daniel was written in the reign of Antiochus by a "patriot bard" (p. 76); and the book of Jonah contains "a late legend founded on a misconception" (p. 77). "In fact the Bible is the written voice of the congregation, and we are not to call the sacred writers passionless machines, and Luther and Milton uninspired" (p. 78).

Having thus dealt with the Bible, it will hardly be surprising that the whole Christian system receives a new theory. Under Bunsen's system, in its Founder "is brought to perfection that religious idea which is the thought of the Eternal, without conformity to which our souls cannot be saved from evil" (p. 80); the plain meaning of which sentence needs no elucidation from us. Justification by faith means peace of mind, not "the fiction of merit by transfer" (p. 80). Regeneration "is an awakening of forces of the soul" (p. 81). Salvation is "our deliverance, not from the life-giving God, but from evil and darkness" (p. 81). Propitiation is the recovery of peace — the eternal is the spiritual — the hateful fires of the vale of Hinnom "serve as images of distracted remorse" (p. 81). "Heaven is not a place so much as fulfilment of the love of God" (p. 82). The incarnation becomes spiritual. "The son of David by birth, becomes the Son of God by the spirit of holiness. What is flesh is born of flesh, and what is spirit is born of spirit" (p. 82). The Trinity is stated in language which is too long to cite, and which we shall not presume to interpret — indeed we should have thought it orthodox, since it is unintelligible and self-contradictory, were it not that we are assured that it is free from the prevailing error of destroying by inference the unity (p. 88). This, however, like the rest, is the view of Baron Bunsen.

Whilst Dr. Temple has thus reduced the national position of the Hebrews to the level of the Romans, and Dr. Williams has reduced the critical authority of the Bible to the level of Livy, we are raised to broader ground in the third essay. With the instinct of the man of science, the late Professor of Astronomy eloquently rejects the mere notion of miracle or violation of the laws of nature. What marks his view is the avoidance of all secondary discussion, and his hold on "the grand foundation conception of universal law" (p. 133). Miracles, indeed, in the popular acceptance of something at variance with nature and law, are repudiated not on the general objections of Hume and his school, but because intellect and philosophy "disown the recognition of anything in the world of matter at variance with the first principle of the laws of matter — the universal order and indissoluble unity of physical causes" (p. 127). "Christianity as a real religion must be viewed apart from connection with physical things" (p. 128). We shall hereafter point out that this view of law is not carried far enough. It is sufficient now to observe that the whole supernatural element is eliminated from belief.

In the very able essay of Mr. Wilson we are carried to a still broader and firmer footing, in which we may "embrace in one panorama the whole religious history of mankind, of which Christianity then becomes the most important phase" (p. 158). We may admit that the authors of the Scriptural books have in certain matters (as in original sin) "represented to us their own inadequate conceptions, and not the mind of the Spirit of God" (p. 154). "Doctrines concerning salvation to be met with in it (the New Testament) are for the most part applicable only to those to whom the preaching of Christ should come" (p. 157). In respect of the heathen we must draw our conclusions "rather from reflections suggested by

our own moral instincts, than from the express declarations of Scripture writers" (p. 157). Indeed the authority of the Gospels is not placed high; for they are represented as not perfectly genuine and authentic, "nor without admixture of legendary matter and embellishment" (p. 161, n.). As to the Old Testament, it is put on the same level of authority as Livy, for "previous to the time of the divided kingdom the Jewish history presents little which is thoroughly reliable. The taking of Jerusalem by Shishak is for the Hebrew History that which the Sacking of Rome by the Gauls is for the Roman" (p. 170, n.). And we are taught that "one may accept literally or allegorically, or as parable, poetry, or legend, the story of the serpent tempter, of an ass speaking with man's voice," etc. etc., "the personality of Satan, and the miraculous particulars of many events" (p. 177).

The evils of the indiscriminate use of the Bible are pointed out, in which the uneducated cannot distinguish between "the dark patches of human passion and error which form a partial crust upon it, and the bright centre of spiritual truth within" (p. 177). It is not merely the genealogies of St. Matthew and St. Luke which cannot be reconciled, or the chronology of the Holy Week, or the accounts of the resurrection, but "the aspects of the Saviour as presented to us in the first three Gospels, and in the writings of St. Paul and St. John" (p. 179). But Mr. Wilson's speculations rise far above philology or historical criticism. That which distinguishes his view is the strength with which he grasps the social aspect of the question. He sees religion in its relation to the State and to nations. It is in this spirit that he repudiates "an isolated salvation, the rescuing of one's self, the reward, the grace bestowed on one's own labours, the undisturbed repose, the crown of glory in which so many have no share, the finality of the sentence on both hands — reflections on such expect-

tations as these may make stubborn martyrs and sour professors, but not good citizens; rather tend to unfit men for this world, and in so doing prepare them very ill for that which is to come" (p. 196). It will be wondered by most men how these are eliminated from the Gospels. It is done by the agency of Ideology, a weapon of tremendous power. By it the facts are eliminated, the ideas remain. "The spiritual significance is the same of the Transfiguration, of opening blind eyes," etc. etc., whether, in fact, it happened or did not. Again, respectfully but firmly we ask, does or does not this apply to the Incarnation, the Resurrection, and Ascension?

After all this, the defenders of the Mosaic cosmogony scarcely needed or deserved so remorseless an exposure as is contained in the fifth essay. It is sufficient for us to mention that the objections brought against it are "not that circumstantial details are omitted, but that what is told is told so as to convey to ordinary apprehensions an impression at variance with the facts" (p. 231), and it is dismissed as the "speculation of some Hebrew Descartes or Newton" (p. 252). Such a view is indeed suggestive, and is capable of unlimited expansion. The sixth essay forms an admirable page in the history of doctrine. Nothing but good can result from an inquiry so patiently and candidly conducted. Being, however, purely historical, it does not share directly in the general scope of the volume, nor can our objections to that fairly apply to this essay. It is remarkable, first, as expressing the discredit into which the *Analogy* of Butler has lapsed in Oxford; secondly, as an unanswerable and suggestive repudiation of a long line of conflicting apologists.

The last essay expands and illustrates the principle of the first. "*Interpret the Scripture like any other book,*" says Mr. Jowett. Some of the results of such a method are the following. It condemns those who deny "the discrepancies of

narrative," "the failure of prophecy," or who "interpret the language in which our Saviour speaks of His own union with the Father by the language of the creeds" (p. 343). The Old Testament attributes to God actions at variance with the higher revelation of the Gospel (p. 347). In the latter we have variations of fact. We are to be prepared for the discovery that man spread from many centres, not from one, and for new conclusions respecting the origin of man (p. 349). Some of the texts respecting the Divinity of Christ are discredited or qualified (p. 352). St. Paul "does not speak of Him as equal to the Father, or of one substance with the Father" (p. 354). We are not to suppose that "He was and was not tempted," etc. etc. (p. 355).

But a Unitarian interpretation is no less deceptive than a Trinitarian (p. 355). The Personality of the Holy Spirit "is spoken in a figure" (p. 360). Original sin rests on "two figurative expressions of St. Paul" (p. 361). Indeed, it is implied that Christianity is at variance with the intellectual convictions of mankind (p. 376). This antagonism the writer hopes may be removed, "when it is considered whether the intellectual forms under which Christianity has been described may not also be in a state of transition and revolution" (p. 420); which can only mean whether the creeds may not be remodelled as occasion may require. Thus, in a word, from one end of this book to the other the same process is continued; facts are idealised; dogmas are transformed; creeds are discredited as human and provisional; the authority of the Church and of the Bible to establish any doctrine is discarded; the moral teaching of the Gospel remains; the moral sense of each must decide upon its meaning and its application.

Now in all seriousness we would ask, what is the practical issue of all this? Having made all these deductions from

the popular belief, what remains as the residuum? How far is the solvent process to be carried? Are all formulæ whatever discarded, or what materials remain to form new? In their ordinary, if not plain sense, there has been discarded the Word of God — the Creation — the Fall — the Redemption — Justification, Regeneration, and Salvation — Miracles, Inspiration, Prophecy — Heaven and Hell — Eternal Punishment and a Day of Judgment — Creeds, Liturgies, and Articles — the truth of Jewish history and of Gospel narrative — a sense of doubt thrown over even the Incarnation, the Resurrection, and Ascension — the Divinity of the second Person, and the Personality of the third. It may be that this is a true view of Christianity, but we insist in the name of common sense that it is a new view. Surely it is waste of time to argue that it is agreeable to Scripture, and not contrary to the Canons.

From the general extracts which we have made, we think it will be seen that this book does radically destroy not a part, but the whole of the popular belief; and that it is designed with very considerable accord and unity of purpose. It will be necessary, however, in order to form a true view of its object, to consider the leading theories and principles put forth in the various essays, and to follow them to their legitimate conclusions.

The essay of Dr. Temple, with which the volume opens, strikes us as at once the strongest instance which the book contains of fatal concessions distorted into specious apology. He starts with the pregnant idea of the gradual development of the human mind. He reads in history each age incorporating into itself the results of the preceeding, and transmitting them in new and fuller forms to its successor. He sees the spiritual unity of the human race. In a word, as we have said, he adopts the positivist conception of mankind

as a colossal man possessing life, and growth, and mind. This principle we regard as the most profound truth contained in this entire volume, and we ask no other with which to judge it and to test it. But we cannot say that it leads us to the same conclusions which are seen in it by the Head Master of Rugby. If this is in any sense the grand conclusion of history, is it not clear that no single race, or age, or system, can be raised into exclusive prominence, be it Jewish, Christian, or Ecclesiastical; that the worst disturbance of this whole is anything which breaks this series, or disjoins this unity, or violates this harmony; that no theory of religion can be sound which does not comprehend all these human forces, societies, and histories?

And does Dr. Temple pretend that this is done by a meagre classification of the four great Educators of the human race, the Hebrews, Rome, Greece, and Asia (*i.e.* Babylon and Assyria), whilst the Church, combining the teaching of the four, is, in its growth, the development of the human race? Certainly these are the only portions of mankind whose existence is recognised officially in colleges and schools; but surely these are meagre proportions for the colossal man. This is no adequate theory of universal history. Were not the Egyptians as much as the Jews "pioneers in civilisation"? Were no primeval societies raised in the plains and valleys of Asia? Are Confucius and the infinite millions who have lived and died under his dispensation drops in the ocean of humanity? Did Buddhism do nothing for "the principle of purity," or was Mohammed a feeble teacher of "the idea of monotheism"? To ignore so much in the past may be the singular result of a classical education; but to drop out of mankind the vast majority of the human race is an astounding proof of the narrowness of the Christian teacher. The stupendous theocracies of the past and the present, the count-

less masses who have been and are held together in the faith of Islam, the infinite myriads of Buddhist societies, the polytheistic and fetishist races sown broadcast over the whole earth, each have their great prophets, play their part in the destiny of the race, and form real elements of its life. The old faith consigned them to hell; the new, it seems, reserves them for annihilation. The colossal man shrinks into one-tenth of the human kind; the development of the race is another term for the growth of the Church.

Again, supposing that the educators of mankind are reduced to four great systems or races, is it clear that the Hebrews exercise so overshadowing an influence? We are told that the main results of their teaching were the "idea of monotheism, and the principle of purity." Does that alone place them above and apart from the other three? Did no others contribute even towards these results? Did Plato teach us nothing concerning monotheism, or Aristotle nothing concerning purity? Or let us grant that the Greeks taught, but did not practise; can the noble elevation of the Roman citizen be compared with the inhuman exclusiveness of the Jew? Surely there are negative results of the Jewish influence. The spirit of persecution, extermination, and narrowness is not Greek. Is Calvinism derived from the Roman or the Jewish temper? Whence come the notions of hell and damnation, of the God of battles, of Pharisaism, and Bibliolatry? Nor are these things trifles, if nothing can be so repugnant to the notion of the unity of man, no temper so pernicious of the progress of the race, as the spirit of cruelty, of pride, of isolation, and of formalism. Yet these are the educators chosen out for a sacred prerogative, their leaders specially honoured, their writings specially studied, their spirit specially imitated. We repudiate them in the world, but we consecrate them in the Church. Finally to put all these considerations

aside, and taking the view of Dr. Temple himself, "that the Hebrews may be said to have disciplined the human conscience, Rome the human will, Greece the reason and the taste, Asia the spiritual imagination"; is it a reasonable conclusion from this "that the immediate work of our day is the study of the Bible"?

Again, supposing the "idea of monotheism" evolved by the Jews raises them high above all ancient nations, and throw Mohammedanism into utter obscurity; at least there has been one phase of faith even superior to that. The Church itself is here represented as the combined result of the Greek, Roman, and Eastern systems; and this view we have no desire to dispute. All that we dispute is, that it is coextensive (actually, morally, or spiritually) with mankind. But if the Church, gathering up the results of the past systems, adds to them and combines with them, the whole essence of Christianity, the growth, the teaching, the spirit of the Church, must be by far the greatest fact in the history of religion. It must present by far the most perfect system; it must itself go on to develop those truths more fully and more nobly. "If the creeds and doctrines, the opinions and principles, of the successive ages are the thoughts of the colossal man," and "if he grows in knowledge," surely his newest thoughts, his latest creeds, after the long process of education and reflection, must be the loftiest and the soundest.

It must be the growth of the Christian Church, at least, which we must study. If it be not a state of society which retrogrades, its latest manners must be its noblest. Or even supposing that no definite period can be fixed, at the very least it must be the Christian literature which must be our Bible. It must be the Catholic ages which must be our standard, and the Fathers of the Church our teachers. Why read Isaiah, when Dante prophesies of a still nobler mono-

theism, made brighter than the Jew's with every Christian grace? Why look only to St. Paul, when St. Bernard preached, not to the infancy, but to the manhood of Christian societies? Why do our congregations chant daily fierce war-songs from the Psalms, rather than the tender prayers of À-Kempis, or the solemn invocations of Milton?

It must be admitted that the writer, whilst insisting in the main on the gradual development of the human mind, does seem to imply two very potent exceptions, or disturbing causes — viz., an external Revelation, and a miraculous Incarnation. It might be sufficient to point out that the principle on which these rest is surrendered in nearly each of the other essays. But, apart from that, it is utterly irreconcilable with any real theory of development. When once the idea is grasped of continuous advance in the human mind, it excludes that of arbitrary breaks and unnatural illuminations; he who understands the meaning of law, whether laws of matter or laws of mind, treats with contempt the notion of miracle in either.

When once it is seen that successive phases of thought in the individual, or the race, are evolved in logical sequence from the ideas which precede them, the mind shrinks from the mere contemplation of external revelation. In short, once admit that Jew and Gentile, Roman and Churchman, have each contributed their share to the common teaching of the race, and formed not merely our politics, but our religion, the idea of a special supernatural revelation, through any one of the joint teachers, becomes a puerile anomaly. If the Babylonians were "selected to teach the Jews the immortality of the soul," and the Jews to teach us the idea of monotheism, how does the revelation vouchsafed through the Jews differ from that vouchsafed through the Babylonians? If the Babylonians "evolved" the one idea, may not the Jews have

simply evolved the other? Once grant both to be parts of one whole, and each is as much or as little inspired as the other. Once place them in a common series, and it is impossible to attribute the one to known laws of the mind, and the other to arbitrary interposition; the code of Manu to a great man, and the code of Moses to God.

But if the supernatural altogether is rejected the moment the idea of intelligible law or continuous life in the history of the human mind is admitted, most of all irreconcilable becomes the great crown of the supernatural — the Incarnation itself. What is the relation which that doctrine bears to the theory of the unbroken life of the race, and the gradual development of its mind? Can any break in the personal identity of the colossal man be more entire? Is it possible to conceive the same stream of life flowing on by regular and natural laws, after, as before that stupendous crisis? Did this human organism, fraught with the vast results of ages, and big with a life which stretched over myriads of years, once, by some mystery, bear within itself for a brief span the Maker of itself and all things, and then again renew the slow toil of its growth, according to the same regular laws, and with the same painful efforts? Or, if that be too strict a reading of the doctrine, did it in any sense once become illumined with Divine wisdom and holiness, and then forget the lesson no less miraculously than it previously had learnt it? In a word, is it rational to conceive the human race as one living and growing whole, and yet believe that it once contained a man who did not receive his knowledge or his character from any earlier teacher, or by any natural process, and who communicated and communicates his thoughts and wishes by other than the ordinary means? It would be as easy to conceive a human being, a part of whose body was exempt from the laws of his physical nature, or a part of whose life had been that of a totally distinct species of animal.

The fact is that the whole essay is a mere mystification. Dr. Temple does not adopt, and scarcely, perhaps, comprehends, the notion of the life of the human race, or its growth by invariable laws. His view of the colossal man is a mere rhetorical phrase, recklessly borrowed and loosely adapted. We spend time upon it for two reasons. In the first place, it is a flagrant instance of the habit now prevalent amongst Churchmen (though rare in this book) of snatching up the language or the ideas of really free-thinking, and using them for their purposes in a way which is utterly thoughtless or shamefully dishonest. The pedantic education and the shuffling morality too rife in the Universities, often leads them to adopt the principles of hostile criticism, in the spirit of the rhetorician or the sophist. They turn criticism into apology by a trope, and twist an axiom of science to support a popular error. How this has been done with the first chapter of Genesis the world now knows, and the Church knows also to its cost. But the identical process discredited for the cosmogony still flourishes for the rest of the Bible; and day after day we see the latest conclusions of philosophy and science travestied into Hebrew phraseology, to defend the pretensions of an official Church.

In the second place, the view put forth in this Essay is important, because it is that which runs more or less through the whole volume. We are far from attributing to the other writers the same inconsequence, and the same spirit of adaptation, but we find in each of them the same leading principles. The notion of a progressive development of religions, of the evolution of creeds according to known laws of the mind, of the unbroken sequence of human thought, is present to all. All look to an utter transformation of the very framework of belief, reduce the Jewish and the Christian dispensations to portions of one stream of thought and faith,

and the Jewish and Christian Scriptures to parts of the common literature of mankind. To all which we answer generally, that the notion of continuous development not only excludes that of mysterious revelations under any disguise, but excludes any possible theory of a perfect, or even a superior, light having been seen in the past; of an ideal, or even a desirable, standard having ever yet been attained or conceived by man. We need scarcely add that it repudiates the exaltation, much more the consecration, of any book or set of books representing a single phase of belief, and one peculiar section of the race; much more so, if such phase be very old and very imperfect, and such book be proved to be hopelessly corrupt and quite unauthentic.

The latter link in the argument is adequately supplied by the second Essay in the volume. Dr. Williams gives us an able summary of the best results of Biblical criticism, and the conclusions of modern Hebrew scholars. Of his work we desire to speak with much respect, whilst we shall push his arguments to their logical deductions, from which his position, or his special studies, perhaps, incline him to abstain. After the extracts already made, it will be sufficient to say, that it subjects the entire Scripture to a process which combines that pursued by Niebuhr upon Livy, with that of Wolf upon Homer. In short, the truth of the narrative and the identity of the authors disappear together. It becomes a medley of legend, poetry, and oral tradition, compiled, remodelled, and interpolated by a priestly order centuries after the times of its supposed authors. And this applies to the New Testament (though in a much less degree) just as to the Old. The process with which classical scholars are so familiar is renewed. The bits of old songs or laws are skilfully picked out of the Pentateuch, which is shown to have been put together under the kings by the priesthood, who recast, and perhaps

fraudulently invented whole books. The Prophecies become sermons of every variety of spirit and purpose. The Psalms become a sort of Hebrew anthology of every possible merit and date. Thus, the Old Testament is reduced to a very fragmentary and very untrustworthy collection of the literature of a certain Arab race. The grand spirit of Moses grows as dim in the dust of centuries as that of Numa. Sinai moves us as little as the cave of Egeria. The primeval poems were distorted into prose by some college of pontiffs or augurs; and the war-songs of old heroes were hammered out into dreary narratives by the designing ingenuity of a caste.

The process does not, of course, go so far with the New Testament, though it must suffer from the proximity of such a neighbour. The first three Gospels were put together from the floating and variable traditions of the Early Church, no man knows how or when. As much might be said for the *Lives of the Saints*. The fourth Gospel, on which so much is rested, is very late, and certainly not by St. John. Indeed, the only thoroughly authentic portion of the whole Scripture seems to be the Epistles — those of St. Paul, that is to say, for many of the others are very suspicious. In the writings of St. Paul, then, we do reach a firm point, of which author, date, and genuineness are certain; but even these, unfortunately, contain corrupt readings and additions, or call them forgeries, on cardinal points, made in the early days when the Church “was creating its theology.”

Was ever a literature so provokingly untrustworthy? The mind wanders over the waste of waters like the dove seeking dry land. We listen for the true words of the great ones of old, but they strike a dull and confused utterance on the ear. Is this the book, or rather collection, which these writers place in the hand of every peasant and every child? Is this the world-wide source of life and truth — this the

surest, noblest outgrowth of ages, and the volume that they consecrate for all time and all races?

They answer, Yes; and they direct us to the sublime poetry of Isaiah, the touching love of the Gospel, and the noble devotion of St. Paul. The world will be in its dotage when these are undervalued or forgotten. But is this enough to consecrate the volume in which they are contained, where so much is uncertain, so much contradictory? Will the ignorant and the poor turn only to those pages, when they are told the others have so much less value? Will it be still Revelation to them, when they know not of what or whom Isaiah may be speaking, when they cannot be sure that they are reading the true words of Christ, and when the doctrines of St. Paul may possibly be spurious, and are comparatively unimportant? These writings will still be read, as the poems of Milton or the allegory of Bunyan will be read; but in what sense will they remain an exclusive standard of belief and a supreme guide of life? It is possible that, had these books been first represented in this character as great but unequal works, they might have been thrust by habit into an exclusive respect; but having once been invested with a mystical sanctity, they must descend from their place of authority (if at all) to one even below their due rank. The masses break idols they no longer worship; they repudiate the guides in whom they had placed an extravagant trust. Our new teachers point out that their idol is but wood and stone, but wish them to retain it on the altar for its beauty and its age. They discredit the veracity of the oracles, and think mankind will still consult them for the poetry of the responses.

These writers, indeed, seem utterly to misconceive the entire question. Their task is not to show that these writings have sublime beauties, teach eternal truths, and are tolerably genuine, but to show why (not being mystical), and being

so very unequal and so utterly uncertain, they should take their place above all other writings, as specially consecrated, canonised, and venerated. It is rather hard to have the Hebrew records shown to harmonise with the full stream of human thoughts, for the mere purpose of placing them over and outside the whole current of which they form part. We are asked to venerate the old prophets, not as seers, but as poets, and then are told to venerate no other poets like them. We are desired to see in the Jewish nation the purpose of ages moving onwards through their history, and then asked to ignore the purpose of ages moving through the history of far nobler and greater nations. It is not that Hebrew poetry is not great, but that Christian poetry is greater; it is not that there is nothing to be learned in the history of the Jews, but that there is more to be learned in the history of the Romans; or, if any insist on the spiritual life of nations, in the history of the Church. Man for man, race for race, the comparison tells against the Jews. Dante towers above Isaiah as much as St. Bernard above Samuel.

If this be true, the maintenance of that race and its literature in unnatural prominence under any pretence, or with any theory of interpretation, is an evil and a delusion. We do not want canons to interpret Scripture — we want to know what makes Scripture at all. We do not wish to learn how far or how little it agrees with science — we wish it to take the place that science shall assign to it. In the meantime we desire that if the Bible or any part of it be retained as Holy Writ, it be defended as a miraculous gift to man, and not by distorting the principles of modern science. Let them be assured that there exists no middle course, that there is no inspiration more than natural, yet not supernatural; no theory of history agreeable to science, though not scientific; no theology which can abandon its doctrines and retain its

authority. The position of Scripture either rests on external authority, or is a thorough perversion of a sound estimate of literature. The Bible can hold its place either by a Divine sanction or by glaring injustice to the other writings of mankind. The question is not whether, stripped of that sanction, it is worthless, but whether other books are not equally valuable.

The Bible retains its hold upon many cultivated minds by its literary power, but that by no means proves that it will do so with the uneducated mass to whom it has so long been an inscrutable law. In short, the plan is one which reduces the whole Bible to the position of the Apocrypha. In them we have books which claim no very high authority, and are not used to establish any doctrine, "but which the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners," as the Article has it. There are fine things in these books, and they possess indirectly a sacred character; yet the mass of mankind about us know nothing of them, never read them, or are guided by them. They have sunk into the same neglect as the Catholic legends or the spurious epistles and gospels of the Church. The world even gives a very harsh sense to the term "apocryphal." Here, then, we have the actual case of portions of the Hebrew records preserved for their value, but shorn of their authority. If this is the position which Scripture is to hold in men's minds, its claims are undoubtedly placed singularly low.

But there is no necessity to consider what would probably happen in such a case, when we have the identical situation already in history. At the Reformation, the whole Catholic literature and apparatus, long venerated as divine, having by degrees lost its practical influence on man, was openly attacked as untrue and unauthentic. The Protestant people to whom its want of authority was shown, rudely rejected

the whole with disgust and scorn. Yet there were noble things in that literature and that art; they were the work of holy men, and produced in ages of intense spiritual life. But that could not rescue them from the popular indignation. They were shown to have spoken falsely to men, to have claimed an inordinate place, and, in part, to have been manufactured for personal motives; and they were trampled under foot. What would it have availed men to come forward to show the fervour, the devotion, the poetry of these legends, to have shown that the lives of the saints had, not indeed a literal, but an ideal truth, or if handling the very strings behind the blinking images of saints, they dilated on the devotional feeling of a statue or a picture? The mass of mankind cannot easily forgive to have been deceived, and they have been deceived in this case, whoever may have caused the result.

There is no reason to fear a reaction of similar violence. The natural indignation of the Protestants was increased by fanatical and political excitement. Men are now wiser and rather less earnest. The Catholic legends now would be preserved as noble remnants, the pictures of the Madonna would be enshrined in museums if no longer in chapels; and the annals of martyrs, saints, and heroes would still be read and cherished with love and pride. But it would be irrational to ask men to retain all these in the old post of rank, to be still the authoritative voice of the Church, still the comfort of men's lives and the guide of their actions and their hopes. It may indeed be said that the Reformation, whilst sweeping away the Catholic literature, still contrived to retain the Bible with even increased authority. But in the first place its authority was never supposed to rest on the same footing as the *Lives of the Saints*. The word of God was always a different thing from the word of the Church, and the attack

then was on the latter. In the second place, there is no portion of the Scripture — not even the Gospels — which they now save from a devouring criticism. They do not say that certain books are not inspired, but that there is no inspiration. They yield not the authenticity of parts, but the authority of the whole.

There is, however, a totally different side of this question. After all, the really fatal objection to the Scripture is, not that it is deficient or occasionally superfluous, and does not contain much of great value which other writings do (as our authors readily admit), but that much — nay, very much — of what it does contain is actively injurious and positively repulsive. This objection, indeed, is now, through moderation and good feeling, not often insisted upon, but it must not be supposed to be abandoned. There is no desire now for violent iconoclasm, and the savage and even brutal attacks of the last century have produced perhaps too strong a reaction. It may again become a duty to hold the same argument with a gentler temper and more guarded words. He who feels keenly the baneful influence diffused through the inmost fibres of social and private life, cannot tolerate that it should be prolonged in the very name of society and morality. And if advantage be taken of the very moderation of our language, it is time to point out the powerful substratum of truth in the fierce invectives of Voltaire and Paine.

With regard to the Hebrew portion, indeed, it is allowed that it can do nothing more than represent the spirit and life of the Jews, and perhaps does very scant justice even to that. Now, in spite of their monotheism, which they held in common with other oriental races, the Jewish national character abounds in repulsive features. The very orthodox believer admits it in order to heighten the miracle of inspiration. It is not enough to say that they were surpassed by the Romans

in this and by the Greeks in that virtue; it must be shown that they were free from fatal defects. We ask whether morbid pride, egotism, ferocity, inhuman hate and frantic fanaticism, superstition and hypocrisy, went for nothing in the national character? And then we go on to ask if this spirit does not and through ages has not shed its blight upon men, and if so, through what agency? Why, all history scarcely shows a race whose character was distorted by such hateful vices. And is it not true that their character, such as it is, runs through every page of their literature, as, indeed, could not be otherwise? It poisons their wild mythology and their sanguinary annals, it stiffens the Mosaic ritual into a debasing formalism; their national songs choke with the thirst for vengeance, and the warnings of their prophets are veiled in a gloomy horror. Again we say we yield to none in honouring what else they have — much that no other books in the world equally possess. What we insist on is, that it is mixed up with an immense percentage of evil. This is not a matter to be dismissed by a parenthesis or a metaphor. It is hardly fair to talk of “flaws” and “patches,” nor does it meet the question to call all this an imperfect revelation. It is trifling with us to say that the Mosaic ritual was given for the “hardness of men’s hearts,” and some impracticable vision is a “counsel of perfection.” We say that evil is evil, and are not willing to adopt the view of Mr. Emerson, that it is a lower form of good.

What we maintain is, that the book which they insist on retaining on the altar and the hearth, for reading in the congregation, and for meditation in secret — the book for *all* — for white and black men, for the poor, the sick, and the child, contains inwoven into its fibre some of the very principles of a bad heart and narrow head. Is it possible to give a moral interpretation to all the legends of Genesis? How many

pages are occupied with the upholstery of the temples and the finery of the Levites? Are not the wars of Israel as dreary as those of the Samnites, and far more shocking? Are the turbulent annals of the Judges and the Kings the most edifying things in all history, even supposing them true in fact? Even the golden words of David and his son contain much dross. They are no little discredited by their lives, and distorted by frightful imprecations and a cynical worldliness. Through the loftiest exhortations of the prophets, and far more through the whole history of their lives and actions, there runs a savage fanaticism and occasional instances of sheer monomania. What we want to learn is, in what way this burden of Judaism may be lifted off the conscience of the people. How shall their public and private life be purified from this? Not, we think, by any explanation of difficulties and canons of interpretation — not by still thrusting before their eyes and dinning into their ears with free comments the legends of Dinah and Tamar, the dreary catalogues of Numbers and Leviticus, the maledictions of the Prophecies and Psalms, and the erotics of the Song of Solomon.

We must not stop here; but not farther to wound honourable feelings, we will be brief. The Bible is one; and it is too late now to propose to divide it. We shall only point out that even the moral value of the Gospel teaching becomes suspicious, when the whole miraculous element is discarded. If the signs and wonders are figures of speech, and certain cardinal facts in the Divine Life untrue, it discredits, at least in some degree, even the honesty of the dispensation which asserts them, as is always urged with undeniable force against the Koran. We certainly do think that the Gospels assert a miraculous incarnation, resurrection, and ascension; and that the Epistles teach original sin, and a vicarious sacrifice. If this be doubted by our authors, it is sufficient for us to say

that such is the impression Gospels and Epistles have created on all ages of Christians; and thus, intentionally or not, they are responsible for the ideas. At least, we are sure that the notions of eternal punishment and final judgment, of individual salvation, of arbitrary grace, and of spiritual ecstasy, pervade the very spirit of the whole Gospel.

It is very easy, indeed, to say that mankind turn to the brighter, never to the darker pages. But is this really so? Are not rather the two mingled together? It may be easy to say that the cry of the "sword of the Lord and of Gideon," is obsolete, and the spirit of persecution dead. These tempers no longer take the form of outward violence; but they still produce a moral degradation. That which almost stifled the political genius of Cromwell, still makes bad citizens; and the literalism of Knox still hardens many hearts. The missionary still looks on himself as Elijah amidst the priests of Baal; and the whole evangelical world still nurses its pride upon the language of the chosen people. In a word, the cruelty of Calvinism, the hypocrisy of Protestantism, and the bigotry of the Church, are Jewish to the core.

What would these writers say if we proposed to them to elevate the Koran into the rule of life, or, not to be too precise, to adopt it into the canon? In the Koran we have all the qualities which seem to be required by their theory of inspiration. It contains the grandest possible conception of monotheism; sublime poetry; and noble morality. It has been the scripture of myriads of mankind; and the law of mighty nations and conquering empires. It embodies the profoundest thoughts and most venerable remnants of an ancient race, and even the results of oriental Christianity. Lastly — which is its highest claim — it forms the basis of the social, moral, and political systems of peoples who have played a great part in the history of mankind. Would all

this suffice for the recognition of the Koran? They would shrink from it with horror. We should be told that it was blood-stained, impure, and extravagant. We should hear that it justified polygamy, slavery, and extermination. We should hear of nothing but its strange legends, fantastic visions, silly miracles, and trivial ceremonial. We should hear this from these Hebrew scholars, but we should not hear from them, that it was not in the main authentic and genuine. But, however authentic or genuine it might be, it would avail with them little to insist upon its transcendent belief and trust in God; its burning devoutness; its moral earnestness; and its practical genius for organisation. They would think us mad if we asked them to place it as the guide of life in the hands of the peasant and the child.

This reflection brings us to what is in fact the very essence of the discussion. The question is not, what is the true theory of revelation? but, what is its true extent? We desire to know not only the true meaning of the term, but how much it comprehends; or (as technical logic has it), not only what it denotes, but what it connotes. Not only must we learn the true conception of Scripture; but what makes certain books Scripture. Now we maintain that Scripture, as such, has either a supernatural basis, or none at all. Any theory of inspiration which ceases to be miraculous, unaccountable, and arbitrary, annihilates it. Any other possible definition either includes too much or too little. It either includes an immense amount besides the given books; or it excludes an immense amount that is in them. All the theories of our essayists in fact do both.

The problem is a very simple one. Here is a collection of books formed (by the hypothesis) neither by accident, caprice, nor authority, but by wise and rational choice. The task is to show that it contains nothing that a wise choice would

exclude, and all that a wise choice would select. Have these essayists proved that? The problem is obviously hopeless when so stated. There are two elements equally necessary to the ordinary notion of inspired Scripture. The first is an arbitrary selection of the writers; the second is a mysterious or, at any rate, inexplicable value in the writings. The moment one or other of these elements is removed, the retention of the Scripture becomes an irrational anomaly. Our Essayists' volume has been written with the direct object of repudiating both these elements. They have found such a position no longer tenable. The result is obvious.

We will follow out this idea in detail. They insist that the writers of these books were not speaking machines or miraculously illuminated; they were great and good men, teachers and priests of men; the educators of the race; the poets who transmuted into sacred song the heart and the brains of myriads and of ages. Let us put their qualities as high as language can reach. Let us imagine any elevation in their characters, contrive any definition of their superiority, until we almost touch the forbidden limit of *superhuman* wisdom. Still they remain men — great men; deriving their insight by and through their fellow-men, transmitting their thoughts by the ordinary channels of persuasion and example. Now does the world show no other great teachers, none equally, or at all comparably great; absolutely none; not even one? Or is not such a notion preposterous?

Mohammed is summarily rejected; still others remain. Let the mind pause and ponder on the long catalogue of great names, over the whole extent of earth, and the whole range of history. Let it survey mankind from China to Peru; from the earliest record of Egypt to the latest around us. Does the eye, looking down the vista of ages, and across continents and oceans, rest on no forms but those of these old Arab

sheiks, warriors, and bards? Do they tower above all times and all mankind? We put aside all intellectual, political, or poetic greatness. We speak now only of spiritual teachers, the founders of religions, who have taught myriads how to have peace within and with their fellows — Zoroaster and Confucius; the Brahmans and the Buddhists. Numa and Odin are scarcely more dim than Moses. Is it certain that they are utterly unworthy of comparison? Mohammed is a form, certain, distinct, and imposing. Is he too utterly beneath the standard of the prophets? If we were speaking to the hardened Pharisees of the day, who see nothing good outside their tribe, it would be useless to continue. But our essayists have deep learning, broad sympathy, and noble candour. They do not condemn all these great spirits to the limbo of foul superstition and debasing priestcraft. They recognise their moral grandeur. They admit that these men, too, gave to their people a dispensation and a law, and led weary hosts into their promised land. For the Christian to consign them to hell, is to condemn his own religion. For the scholar and the thinker to consign them to oblivion, is to prostitute his learning.

Well, but it is said, let these men be honoured to the full; be their history and their writings studied. Still they did not form part of the central current which led up to the Gospel. They did not found that society in which we live; or sow the seeds of that rich harvest which we gather. They are not *our* moral and spiritual ancestors. In the first place, this is not true. Our essayists abundantly prove how much the great oriental systems acted on the Jews; how much, in short, the Bible indirectly owes to Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian thought; how much Christianity itself owes to the religious mind of the Roman and the Teuton, and to the intellect of the Greek. Besides which, such an argument at once surrenders

the whole theory of the "Education of Mankind." It narrows the teachers of the race down into *our* teachers; and can only escape from the dilemma by the monstrous assumption that the "progress of the Church is the development of mankind." In short, to assume that God is educating His creatures, and then that the history of that education is that of the education of the people of Europe, is the exact counterpart of the blind egoism of the Calvinist, who sees no salvation out of the clique of "professors." But be it true or false, such an argument is worthless, because it proves too much. If our spiritual and moral ancestors are the inspired authors of Scripture, where is the place in the canon of Plato and Aristotle, of Cicero and Epictetus? Or if these be rejected as teachers of mere human morality or as unspiritual masters, where (since the old Hebrews led *up* to the Gospel, and rudely prepared the way or saw it afar off), where in the canon is the place of the great Christian priests, teachers, and prophets, who led *down* from the Gospel, inspired with its purest light carrying its message over all lands and into all tribes, and ringing out its simple words into matchless hallelujahs of song?

What are those gates which open to some nameless Levite and some obscure catechumen, and are shut to the great founders of Christian churches and the lawgivers of Christian congregations? Where is this sacred circle of the blessed, where sit beside the great Moses scribes and copyists, without name or history — some Jonah, Micah, Nahum, and Habakkuk; and beside the great Paul unknown converts and evangelists, or some James or John or Jude; and whence are rejected as unworthy Augustine and Aquinas, the St. Gregorys and St. Bernards, the St. Bonifaces and St. Benedicts, Dante and Milton, À-Kempis and Bunyan, Calvin and Luther, Borromeo and Bossuet? Is it *because* the catalogue of

Christian martyrs, prophets, and saints is so rich that it is to be utterly excluded; and the whole history of the Church ignored, *because* it is so grand and copious? Does the story of the Hebrews teach so much of God, and this nothing? Is the spirit of the Gospels so pure, and of these men so earthly? Is the sacred poetry so lofty, and the profane so tame?

It is the great honour of the Anglican party to have seen this necessity, and to have insisted on it with such zeal, that it is now become impossible, even within the Church, to resist its legitimate conclusions. It will be said against us, however, that it is impossible to admit all these, and irrational to call so incoherent a collection a Scripture. We are far from proposing anything of the sort. We only ask what becomes of a Scripture professing to represent the ideas of our spiritual ancestors, which not only rejects all these, but takes absolutely no more account of them or of the system under which they lived than if they had never existed? We reply that such a Scripture is an anomaly. But we are told the whole history of the Church, the principles, the teaching, and the poetry of the whole Catholic ages, are adequately represented in the Gospels; the germs are there — the rest is the outgrowth. There is the fountain, the standard, and the law. The chiefest utterances of the whole Church, they say, are morally, or ideally, or potentially contained in these pages of the New Testament.

Now this will hardly suffice when we reflect that there is bound up with this book another, many times larger, which is certainly, if not unchristian or anti-christian, at any rate prechristian. In what sense does the old Jewish tradition, society, and law represent or harmonize with the Catholic; the Talmudic with the mediæval legends; the fierce old chieftains with the early saints; their war-songs with monastic prayers? Is not the mere presence of so singular a nationality

enough to neutralise the power of the whole book as an expression of the spirit of the early Church? Or if this objection appear small, can it, in any sense, be said that the Gospels virtually express the highest utterances, and the truest ideals of the whole subsequent Christian world? They preserve, it is said, the true and pure image of the life and mind of our moral and intellectual ancestors; or in the oriental hyperbole of Mr. Jowett, "The Bible is Christendom." But it must be plain that we live and act under influences, moral and spiritual, which date from much later ages, and are in no sense represented or even foreshadowed in those books. Surely the whole influence of Catholicism, as well as of Protestantism, can scarcely be summed up within the four corners of this one Book.

Let us reflect what we owe to these organisations. The mighty framework of the feudal church; the abolition of slavery; the honoured rank of women; the cultivation of sacred art; not to speak of all the practical and political institutions of all Christian societies, together with the whole system of ritual liturgy and practice with which our daily life is interwoven; and the whole chorus of sacred poetry, fiction, and meditation, is certainly not to be discovered even in germ in the Scriptures by the most ideal interpretation. Yet to do justice to our moral and spiritual ancestors, it should be so. Why, upon the very lowest footing to answer this theory, the Prayer-Book should form a substantive part of Scripture. The Liturgy at any rate must be inspired — nay, on the theory proposed, even more than the Gospels; as the invocations of Isaiah teach a "fuller law" than the ritual of Moses which gave them the germ.

But if all history did not protest against being thus idealised, it is equally irrational to suppose such an arbitrary limit of inspiration. These authors take pains to show, that there is

through all Hebrew history a growing and regular movement; nothing fortuitous or stationary; all moves on with intelligible and admirable order. The Mosaic dispensation rises out of still earlier and dimmer theocracies; its formalism is succeeded by the riper conscience of the prophets; they are expanded by the new lessons of the Captivity. Thus the spirit of the Jewish race rises higher and richer as it lives. Then the new dispensation is attached to the old; all without break, without chance, and without miracle. The Jewish law develops into the Christian, the soul of Isaiah is purified and expanded into that of St. Paul. He, too, takes a broader, grander view of his mission than St. Peter; and the Catholic Church rises up before the dying eyes of the last of the apostles.

Let us remember that all this is not taking place in an isolated and exceptional corner of the world. It is carefully shown how all this harmonises with the great scheme of man's destiny through all ages and races. Greece, Rome, and Asia have each in the meantime been developing their stream, and in the Catholic Church the many streams are combined in one full tide. It neither grows sluggish nor turbid. It swells on in increasing majesty. The Catholic ages rise to new conceptions, and form nobler institutions. Its task widens with its strength. It is bound by the trammels of no law; it bears the spirit of truth in its own bosom. It goes on ever proclaiming in loftier tones the purpose of God running through all ages. Such is the high argument of this book; but how does it square with the canon of Scripture?

We are told that this canon embodies the best forms and utterances of this spirit as it moves onwards. For a time it may be said in some measure to do so. From Moses to St. Paul, the teaching of the long succession of prophets may be said to be represented. Why, then, does it suddenly stop

there? The current of sacred inspiration itself does not pause; why, then, this abrupt cessation of its words? It would hardly satisfy us if the Jewish roll were half unopened, and the prophets and the poets rejected as uncanonical; nor if the prophets were divided from each other, or the sacred story closed before the time of Ezra. How much more would it be intolerable that the Gospels themselves should be excluded? or if we were told that the new dispensation was ideally present in the old, and the Hebrew Scriptures were adequate embodiments of the life of Christian societies? Such a suggestion sounds preposterous. But it is not thought preposterous to close the canon in the lifetime of the apostles, and to confine the eighteen centuries of many-sided Christian energy in the scanty formulæ and thoughts of times when not a Christian society existed, and a Catholic Church was a faint vision even to the greatest of the apostles.

The effort to prove that, although inadequate as a representation of succeeding ages, the Scripture surpasses all subsequent writings in intensity and elevation, may for a moment succeed. But such an argument is in the long run terribly suicidal. Directly it is urged, under any possible theory, that the highest and most distinct utterances of the Church were made eighteen centuries since, and stand above and marked off from all later words, the inevitable conclusion rushes in that the Church does not in reality advance, that if it grows in extent it does not rise in true strength of spiritual life — in short, that it does not develop. Such an argument is urged with fatal force against the Catholic Church when it appeals to the purer ages of the faith. Such a view our essayists for their own Church repudiate. The whole spirit of their teaching contradicts it. They tell us how “through the ages an increasing purpose runs.” They insist it is not the growth of the Church alone they see, but of the races of

mankind. Ages accumulate and concentrate their store. Conflicting nations are fused into a broader whole. And with all this as a theory of history and religion, they offer to all races the standard and ideas of one, and hold up before the eyes of the present the moral measure of the irrecoverable past.

We now quit this question of inspiration, which is the leading subject of this book, as it is the critical question of our time. Excellent theories of inspiration are given by our authors, with none of which are we much disposed to differ. Be it the highest utterance of mankind, or the teaching of God to man through man's heart and mind; be it the guiding principle of human life, or the voice of the congregation — all these phrases used in their full and natural sense express a reasonable and probably a sound theory. Such a theory, however, under no reading, can establish the position of Scripture. It rejects much in it, and it requires much beside it. It is not, moreover, a mere question as to the use of a particular book; we are not willing to quarrel about words. And some of our authors, when talking of Scripture, may surrender the consecration, the authority, and even the exclusive use of it as a sacred book. That concession would hardly satisfy our want. The real evil would remain even if the book were not read daily in the congregations and multiplied by the million. To teach in its spirit, to think in its ideas, to use its language, and to judge by its standard, is, we maintain, equally contradictory to a sound view of human history, and not much less injurious to the actual progress of society. This latter purpose at the very least, we think, our authors have avowed; and it is for this that we feel bound to ask all who are thoroughly free to think to reject their teaching. There is little use in denouncing bibliolatry in order to encourage bibliography.

One word as to the moral aspect of this controversy. Of the spirit and tone of this book it is impossible to speak too warmly, nor in refusing to accept the final issue of its argument would we be wanting in respect to the candour of its authors. "Amicus Plato"; "they are our friends who have introduced this doctrine of ideology." But we cannot but point out the fatal moral aspect of this new defence. The history of the defence of the Bible singularly and sadly resembles that of the defence of the Cosmogony. Exactly the same process is repeated: constant retreat, ever shifting positions, and industrious extenuation. Science steadily advances and covers the abandoned ground. The Catholic Church thought that the "round world was so fast it could not be moved." Then came Galileo. The Calvinist surrenders Joshua's command; the orthodox Churchman speaks of the "ages," not the days of creation. Then a Buckland or a Miller surrenders the actual, but retains the ideal truth of the whole. Lastly, comes a broader Christian, who looks on the whole Hebrew cosmogony as an unscientific invention.

Step by step the Scripture is similarly surrendered. The parallel holds good in detail. First, the accuracy of trifling facts in narrative is doubted. Then prophecies become poetry, and glaring improbabilities are figures. Then candid Churchmen read many miracles and narratives in a spiritual light. Then come earnest, bold, and learned thinkers, like our essayists, who, laying down an entire scheme of history, make the Scripture fall into its place; and prodigally use every hypothesis of "vision," and "ideology," and "partial revelation," "the spiritual aspects of natural laws," and "the purposes of God in history," and all the well-known apparatus of elaborate and ingenious concordance. Such are, we maintain, exactly in the Hugh Miller stage of the Bible controversy. In the way he strove to defend the Cosmogony,

they defend the entire Bible. There is one step further to be taken. What they have done to Hugh Miller must be done unto them. They can see in him the futile and fatal nature of his task. They can charge him with representing his Bible as a "series of elaborate equivocations." They can tell him that he cedes the point in dispute, and "admits that the Mosaic narrative does not represent correctly the history of the universe"; that the real difficulty is, "not that circumstantial details are omitted, but that what is told, is told so as to convey to ordinary apprehensions an impression at variance with facts."

We might transcribe the whole essay. We might compare it with this volume sentence by sentence. Let any fair mind study it with this view, and read for cosmogony, the Scripture, and for physical facts, historical, moral, and spiritual truths, and he will see a deeper and wider meaning in the sentence than their author originally intended: "The spectacle of able, and we doubt not, conscientious writers engaged in attempting the impossible, is painful and humiliating." They can see that the first chapters of Genesis are "the work of some Hebrew Newton," why hesitate to admit that the rest are the work of some Hebrew Livy? They would hesitate to teach mathematics by the use of the Mosaic Principia; but do not hesitate to teach morality out of some oriental Niebelungen Lied, or the whole duty of man from some Pauline or Petrine Golden Legend.

Such is the manner in which it has been found necessary, by the most advanced thinkers within the orthodox pale, to explain and modify the doctrine of inspiration. It will be of use to inquire, what is the power which has driven them to this necessity? We may answer, that it is the advance of the conception of development. Step by step the notion of evolution by law is transforming the whole field of our

knowledge and opinion. It is not one order of conception which comes under its influence, but it is the whole sphere of our ideas, and with them the whole system of our action and conduct. Not the physical world alone is now the domain of inductive science, but the moral, the intellectual, and the spiritual are being added to its empire. Two co-ordinate ideas pervade the vision of every thinker, physicist or moralist, philosopher or priest. In the physical and the moral world, in the natural and the human, are ever seen two forces — invariable rule, and continuous advance; law and action; order and progress, these two powers working harmoniously together, and the result, inevitable sequence, orderly movement, irresistible growth.

In the physical world, indeed, order is most prominent to our eyes; in the moral world it is progress; but both exist as truly in the one as in the other. In the scale of nature, as we rise from the inorganic to the organic, the idea of change becomes ever more distinct, just as when we rise through the gradations of the moral world the idea of order becomes more difficult to grasp. It was the last task of the astronomer to show eternal change even in the grand order of our solar system. It is the crown of philosophy to see immutable law even in the complex action of human life. In the latter, indeed, it is but the first germs which are clear. No rational thinker hopes to discover more than some few primary axioms of law, and some approximating theory of growth. Much is dark and contradictory. Numerous theories differing in method and degree are offered, nor do we decide between them. We insist now only upon this, that the principle of development in the moral as in the physical, has been definitively admitted; and something like a conception of one grand analogy through the whole sphere of knowledge has almost become a part of popular opinion.

Nothing could more strikingly show how deeply this has penetrated, than the consideration of the two books which of late years have excited the most lively interest in English thought. Just as Mr. Darwin has introduced the principle of growth in one of the most rigid laws of the physical world; so the reception given to the book of Mr. Buckle has proved that public opinion was ripe for the admission of regular laws in the moral world. Whatever may be the value of his particular theories, no candid mind could have watched the controversy they evoked without seeing how far men were ready to acknowledge discoverable laws in society. Most men shrink from any broad statement of the principle, though all in some special instances adopt it. It surrounds every idea of our life, and is diffused in every branch of study. The press, the platform, the lecture-room, and the pulpit ring with it in every variety of form. Unconscious pedants are proving it. It flashes on the statistician through his registers; it guides the hand of simple philanthropy; it is obeyed by the instinct of the statesman. There is not an act of our public life which does not acknowledge it. No man denies that there are certain, and even practical laws of political economy. They are nothing but laws of society. The conferences of social reformers, the congresses for international statistics and for social science, bear witness of its force. Everywhere we hear of the development of the Constitution, of public law, of public opinion, of institutions, of forms of society, of theories of history. In a word, whatever views of history may be inculcated on the Universities by novelists or epigrammatists, it is certain that the best intellects and spirits of our day are labouring to see more of that invariable order, and of that principle of growth in the life of human societies and of the great society of mankind, which nearly all men more or less acknowledge and partially and unconsciously confirm.

But this conception of law is not confined to the visible results of society; it equally invades the whole province of the invisible action of successive generations. We are just as familiar with the idea of development in the history of the intellect and the heart, of philosophy and of conscience, as in the history of the earth or of society. Systems of science, of concrete or abstract speculation, of logic or of metaphysics, are all invariably represented as moving on in a regular series. A history of the inductive sciences or of psychology, which offered no link of concatenation, would be regarded as a tiresome absurdity. No man could write now without adopting the accretion and transmission of the results of thought. Nor could he rest without at once pointing to the changes, and yet explaining the sequence. An abrupt break, or an unintelligible perturbation would utterly confound and neutralise his theory. To exhibit a uniform aberration or a prolonged stagnation of the stream of thought, would be either to condemn his own theory or the thinkers whose ideas he was recording. If he found that Kant had not adequately received the conceptions of Leibnitz, or that Leibnitz had added nothing to those of Descartes, he would suspect some unsoundness in the Cartesian basis. If the followers of Spinoza had done worse than not improve upon his doctrine, he would be a bold writer who should ask us to go back to pure Spinozism. Lastly, if a man proposed to start *de novo* with ontology upon the metaphysical basis of Aristotle, it would be a strange preparation to show that Aristotle himself could not be brought within the laws of the growth of thought; but that his scheme, after working through the brains of twenty centuries of thinkers, had issued in nothing clearer or surer, but rather had been utterly distorted and misconceived.

The same view holds good equally, but less obviously,

in the spiritual as in the intellectual domain. All men more or less acknowledge the development of morality. None, at least, deny a steady movement in the main in public conscience. Most call it the advance of civilisation, and they do not mean merely the improvement of material life. Call it what we please, it is the growth of the spiritual, or highest or directing power of the human character. It is an elevation of conscience, an increase of virtue or goodness, of faith or religion. The term signifies little; the rate, the mode of advance is unimportant. Very few would admit this to the full. Some growth of moral stature all men recognise. Modern States, on the whole, are purer than ancient. The loftiest tones of the old moralists are, on the whole, beneath our level. Plato and Aristotle have their repulsive and their cold tempers to our minds. The Academy degraded women; the Stoics bought slaves. We need not stop there. The history of ages of Christendom is one long story of persecution. St. Bernard condemned Abélard; Calvin condemned Servetus. Much of the noblest of the reformers is repulsive to us. The solid morality of Butler leaves much to be supplied. All this is obvious. All, indeed, openly accept the notion of *moral* growth. They even go farther. They admit a growth in the conscience; the whole theory of man's duty.

Let us consider what this implies. It means an improvement, not only in the practice, but in the conceptions of right and wrong; the growth of man into a nobler being; his rising to a purer and truer sense of his destiny. Surely this is not merely moral growth. It is spiritual, it is religious advance. This, we doubt not, is a hard saying. What, then, is the element in man's moral being which does not advance, and which is not subject to laws? Is it faith? Is it hope? It certainly is not charity. In that we advance. We love

our neighbour more wisely and more truly than our ancestors. Is it said that we do not love God more wisely and more truly? Not when we read nobler lessons in His infinite creation, and feel a wider and purer love for the greatest of all His creatures. The line to be drawn, if at all, must be left to others. Let them show some part of our spiritual nature which moves not with our moral, and discover an essential difference, and not an arbitrary distinction.

Certainly it will not be done by our Essayists. From one end of their book to the other, the notion runs of the growth of the spiritual life of man. Their view is a proof of the strength of this general tendency in opinion; but it is an admirable expansion of it. Indeed, the whole world is ready to talk at all times of ages of faith, or decay of belief, or revivals of religion. The flourishing of churches, or the purification of congregations, testify to the same idea. These views may, indeed, suppose only partial or exceptional rises and falls. But they adopt some notion of sequence and order in spiritual life. The principle once implanted may be left to itself. Their fancies of periodic motion may be left to take their place beside the recurring cycles of Vico. It was a great deal when he saw orderly movements in history. Let us be satisfied that they see methodical revolutions in belief.

Such a confined theory of the growth of spiritual life is certainly not seen in our Essayists. They, at any rate, proclaim the continuous development of religion. From the first page of the first essay, which insists on the advancing movement of the whole spiritual world, to the last essay, which contains a most eloquent expansion of this idea, it is continually present. In the beautiful words of Mr. Jowett, "the end is yet unseen, and the purposes of God towards the human race only half revealed." He feels "that the continuous growth of revelation which he traces in the Old and New

Testament is a part of a larger whole, extending over the earth, and reaching to another world." In a word, the history of religion shows a progress by intelligible laws. The analogy of the material and the intellectual domain is extended to that of faith.

Such a conception, as we have said, involves two elements. It involves that of advance and that of regularity. Both these ideas, in our opinion, force them to conclusions not only not found in their book, but vigorously contradicted by its entire language and spirit. They are zealous, indeed, in showing their willingness to surrender the notion of violation of physical law, or the mere analogy of the order of the universe. We have no desire to press this further, or to point to their distinctness upon Balaam's ass, or the herd of swine, and their silence on more cardinal miracles. Be it enough that they repudiate all miraculous, supernatural, or arbitrary disturbance of the laws of nature. Science must determine on all *facts*; criticism upon all *events*. We forbear to ask them whither all this tends, and to put one simple and cardinal question — *φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσι*.

It is, however, a graver duty to ask them why this vigorous repudiation of all disorder in the material world, whilst insisting on stupendous perturbations in the moral? Why are all facts contrary to science rejected, and theories contrary to history retained? Why are physical miracles absurd, if spiritual miracles abound? Why does history look forwards, and religion backwards? Why are there no suspensions in the laws of matter, yet cardinal suspensions in the laws of mind? Why use rhetoric to confirm the grand analogy of physical nature, and then use it in the next breath to confound the grander analogy of human nature? Their language is adequate for the one, why not apply it to the other? They see "the grand foundation conception of universal

law," "the invariable operation of a series of eternally impressed consequences, following in some necessary chain of orderly connection." Such a law, we insist, is read more or less distinctly in all human history, life, and spirit. And whatever may be the degrees of precision or extent in our knowledge of these laws, the great principle of an analogy in the order of society pervades all educated minds.

That principle our Essayists admit, and indeed eloquently express. They do not pursue it to its logical deductions. We tell them that the whole science of human nature may be very far from presenting a definite system, or a complete theory; but what we are quite certain of even now, is that the whole analogy of history condemns, not merely miraculous events, but stupendous violations of order in the growth of moral and spiritual life. It condemns not merely all stationary forms of faith, but all attempts to train the moral and spiritual life of the present by the light, or in the spirit, or with the hopes (much more than by the words) of one distant and peculiar phase of the past.

The extent to which scientific criticism has undermined the whole framework of doctrine, is sufficiently manifested by the appearance of this book. The manner in which this decay is met is its characteristic feature. It surrenders, in fact, not merely the various points of the doctrine, but the necessity of retaining any system of doctrine at all. This spirit, indicated throughout the volume, culminates in the concluding essay of Mr. Jowett. It is as difficult to say how many of his young hearers this essay will lead away, as it is to say whither it will lead them. The tone of earnestness, tenderness, and courage that breathes through it will prove very fascinating to their open hearts. It possesses, indeed, most of the qualities requisite for a religious revival. Its sympathy for the spirit of Scripture never runs into servility

to the words. It is candid to the present, and throws a halo over the selected portion of the past. It brings down all the influence of grand and hallowed phrases upon minds enfeebled by a long training upon sentences and words. It offers imposing theories of mankind made musical with poetry and text to the young brains who are just constructing their first or second "Philosophy of Being." It offers them a bright, not too systematic view of human goodness, and it frees them from the thralldom of intellectual convictions.

That such a view should have success in such an atmosphere is natural enough. We deny, however, that it can have a chance of success with the men and women around us, or that it bears the remotest resemblance to religions or faiths which sustain societies and nations. It acknowledges in sad and eloquent words the prevailing antagonism between our intellectual convictions and our religious professions. It hopes to mitigate the evil by thrusting the intellectual behind the moral element of the belief. The doctrine it leaves as possibly erroneous and comparatively unimportant; it sums up the Gospels in the practice of the Christian life. This is a wide-spread and very attractive modification, but it is one in which most faiths have eventually terminated. The old polytheism, undermined for ages, ended in the visions of Neo-Platonism. Hypatia confronting Cyril could show the beauty and the soul of the ancient faith, and surrendering the mythology, interpreted its meaning. The later Buddhism and Sufism of India show the same dilution of the doctrines of Sakya and Mohammed. The Quietists spiritualised Catholicism into a moral perfection, the Wesleyans spiritualised Protestantism into an ecstasy of the soul. Around us the same process is renewed. Presbyterians, Quakers, and Unitarians are casting off the dead frame of their tenets, and seeking to revitalise the essence.

It seems strange in the present day to be insisting that religious societies must be held together by common opinions, convictions, and schemes of belief, and not by common feelings or practices. Every religion which ever flourished did so by the strength of a body of doctrine and a system of definite axioms. Nothing else could give unity and permanence to its teaching. No collection of maxims or rules of life can last very long when deprived of dogmatic basis and common intellectual assent. The whole teaching and influence of every religion has rested ultimately and entirely on cardinal propositions universally received as true. The authority of the Catholic priest rested mainly on the sacraments — these latter on the scheme of redemption, and that on the divinity of Christ. St. Bernard knew how much his moral power rested on the notion of Transubstantiation; it was through that very dogma that the whole Catholic system was attacked. Nothing but such a basis can satisfy the mind of the inquirer or give coherence to the social body. Moral principles have been found to lead to strife when made the foundation of communities. They cannot be preserved from distortion through every character which receives them, and put no check on intellectual superstructures which utterly overwhelm them. Endless attempts have been made towards union in an ideal life. They have ended invariably in chimera and confusion.

It is far from a new thing to propose as a religion the following of the Christian life. It has been done before by orthodox mystics and protesting Waldenses, by Moravians and Latter-Day Saints, by À-Kempis, by Fox, by Fénelon, and by Wesley. Indeed, this is so obvious, that it will hardly be thought possible that our authors can have forgotten it. We are far from saying that they have fallen into the mysticism which has misled many admirable spirits; but what they

maintain is built upon the same unstable basis. In this last essay at least there is a deliberate attempt to admit the doctrine as uncertain and transitory, and to bind together the faithful by the imitation of one great ideal. Creeds are discredited as accidental and variable, principles as essential and eternal. The moment one cardinal dogma is surrendered as uncertain or even as provisional, the whole intellectual framework gives way. All the repose, the unity, all the permanence which rest upon undoubted truths are gone. The unguided feelings, the variety and fluctuation of moral conceptions, take their place in endless agitation and discord.

Such a work, indeed, undoes the labour of St. Paul, brought to perfection by the Church. He taught Faith, Hope, and Charity, insisting, indeed, chiefly on the moral truth, but resting it on a system of immutable doctrine. He preached a life of righteousness in this world to be followed by certain glory in the next. He preached "Christ, and Him crucified." Once doubt the certainty of the story or the reality of the sacrifice, and to what will the preacher appeal? He will be left to the truism, "To be good, for it is good to be good." It is useless now to repeat that the whole martyrology itself, stripped of miracle or fable, is left in hopeless perplexity. It is of more use to point out how far that ideal is made up (as, for instance, in the Sermon on the Mount) of those "counsels of perfection" and of that "personal salvation" which are in this book rejected as impossible or immoral. Subtract, indeed, from that all hyper-Christian precepts and the whole theory of the life in heaven, and what remains as a residuum? Not assuredly a religion — a picture of humility, gentleness, and love, a body of beautiful maxims, the ideal of tender hearts and spotless consciences. It is not this which can bring order out of the intellectual anarchy around us,

control the whole moral energy of the present, and heal the deep diseases in societies and states.

Our account of this book would be incomplete unless we were to point to the reception it has received. It has passed through two editions, it has been read and discussed within and without the Church, with the hesitation of reflection or the pleasure of surprise. Nowhere has there been seen or heard a sign of official repudiation. These professors, tutors, principles, and masters still hold their chairs and retain their influence. No authorised rebuke has been put forward. They have been left to the bark of the toothless watchdogs of orthodoxy. The authorities of the Universities are paralysed, and incapable even of a protest. They have had the pain of seeing nearly all the brain and heart of their foundations ranged on the other side; they seem to have issued an order of the day to ignore so painful a subject. In the meantime, many of the younger members have received it with welcome and assent, many also with welcome, but with slight assent. Indeed, no one that knows the religious state of the Universities could doubt that such a book would be eagerly welcomed, but welcomed only as a partial instalment. Few, perhaps, are aware how far the decay of belief extends beneath those walls.

These are not the days of metaphysical atheism or pedantic logic (at least, out of the ranks of official apologists). It is the ablest, the sincerest, and the best who feel their faith giving way beneath them. The Church is losing now at once the best heads and the best hearts. It is character, influence, and sympathy with mankind, which now mark those who stand aloof. Are not these seven authors worthy representatives of the best of their order? Others as high in place and influence have spoken less, but have not therefore thought less. Perhaps, if they have been silent, they have found it still

more difficult to speak. This volume draws a sad picture of the prevalence of intellectual doubt within those cloisters. That picture is far short of the reality. "Smouldering scepticism," indeed! When they are honeycombed with disbelief, running through every phase from mystical interpretation to utter atheism. Professors, tutors, fellows, and pupils are conscious of this wide-spread doubt. In silence they watch and respect each other's thoughts, and silently work out their own. Above them sit unconscious dignities and powers vaguely condemning pantheism and neology, or piecing the articles together with scraps of accommodating texts. Such are those seminaries of the Priesthood and the Church, and he who has passed through them has seen the circles of an intellectual purgatory.

How long shall this last? The vague intellectual craving, the waste of moral purpose, the sense of blank indifference, are felt even more strongly there than in the world around us. Few indeed now hesitate to see the ultimate source of nearly all social confusion in this severance of reason and religion — this gulf which divides the highest thinking from the highest feeling. It is made far more deadly by the hypocrisy of concealment or the torpor of indifference. It must be a profound evil that all thinking men should reject a national religion. It is almost worse that they should falsely pretend to accept it. In what a network of contrary influences is our daily life passed. All the tenderer and holier of our ties lead one way; all the stronger and more rational, another. The home, the school, and the Church touch chords in our hearts. Life, thought, and society nullify and dispel their teaching. The newspaper, the review, the tale by every fireside, is written almost exclusively by men who have long ceased to believe. So also the school-book, the text-book, the manuals for study of youth and manhood, the whole mental food of the day;

science, history, morals, and politics, poetry, fiction, and essay; the very lesson of the school, the very sermon from the pulpit. And all this is done beneath a solemn or cynical hypocrisy.

How long shall this last? How long must there be bitterness of heart in every household, and a hardened despair in every vigorous brain? How long shall the mother's words fall coldly on the ear of the son — the prayers of the wife be unmeaning to the husband — the grey hairs of the preacher scarcely save him from contempt? And (far worse) the masses lie in brutal heathenism, whilst great minds run to seed in selfish, because irreligious efforts? Until men have the courage to bury their dead convictions out of sight, and the greater courage to form new. All honour to these writers for the boldness with which they have, at great risk, urged their opinions. But what is wanted is strength not merely to face the world, but to face one's own conclusions. It is well to say what one really believes. It is better to believe what one really thinks. Even more necessary now than courage in act is honesty in thought. We need that rectitude and tenacity of mind which abhors to deceive itself; and works out the issues of its reasoning without flinching and without fainting. We know the cost. The sense of despair, the shudder of the mind, the tearing up of dear associations, the agony of the family, have darkened the picture of every religious convulsion. It must be endured. Let every one with hearts and brains concur in the inevitable task. Let each who has thought and felt for himself ask himself first what he *does not* believe, and then, if wise or needful, avow it. Next let him ask himself what he *does* believe, and pursue it to its true and full conclusions. Let violent attack be avoided, but the mask of conformity cast off. May no honest mind be disturbed, but let hollow peace be rejected.

If we have spoken strongly, few of our readers are likely to be quite at rest, whilst many are being drawn towards a premature compromise. Let such reflect that no half-measures will succeed. Neither loose accommodation nor sonorous principles will long give them rest. It is of as little use to surrender the more glaring contradictions of science as it is to evaporate a discredited doctrine into a few vague precepts. Religion, to regain the world, must not only be not contrary to science but it must be in entire and close harmony with science. Not with one science only, but with all. Not only must it have a place beside philosophy, morals, and politics; but it must guide and elevate all these. Religion, to have strength, must have a doctrine; and a doctrine, to endure now, must embody the outgrowth of human thought. If it be not distinctly proved therefrom, it must at least flow from and sum up the whole. Its intellectual basis must be broad and unimpeachable. The highest efforts of the brain must guide the best promptings of the heart. That end will not be attained by our authors, by subliming religion into an emotion, and making an armistice with science. It will not be obtained by any unreal adaptation, nor by this, which is of all recent adaptations, at once the most able, the most earnest, and — the most suicidal.

IV

A SOCRATIC DIALOGUE

1876

The following Dialogue appeared in the "Contemporary Review," May 1876, vol. xxvii. It was an answer to an article by Mark Pattison, Rector of Lincoln. It occasioned a prolonged controversy with John Ruskin, who wrote on it in "Fors Clavigera," May 1876, vol. vi., reissued in the "Complete Ruskin," vol. xxix., where the correspondence relating to it, both public and private, is reproduced. The answer to Mr. Ruskin appeared in the "Fortnightly Review," July 1876, "Past and Present," and is reproduced in the "Choice of Books," 1886.

PERSONS :

SOPHISTES, a College Don

PHÆDRUS, a barrister from town

(At Oxford: The Walks round Magdalen College in May)

Sophistes. Ah! most positive of men, what happy chance brings you back to our studious groves? 'Tis pleasant to find you meditating here, in the old haunts amid the May blossoms.

Phædrus. Nay, son of sweetness and light, there is no place in which I feel more truly at home. I often fancy that the *genius loci* touches us strangers more deeply than it can you residents who have it always with you. I have but just

slipped out from the roar of the London torrent — a Niagara perpetually falling and then passing on in foam — and I find myself here in a very Lotus island of peace and thought.

S. You mean a land where it is always — the middle of last week.

P. No, not I; what I love in Oxford is that sense of spiritual retirement, even more than its immemorial charm. It seems to me one of those spots where there lingers in the air a loyalty to ideas. And surely it has been the cradle of two revivals of our time, the craving for the real, both in history and religion.

S. A Daniel come to judgment! We would fain believe all this; but we have our own Niagara of everlasting examinations, our prize-hunting, our cub-grinding, and the general millennium of cram.

P. I pity you; but I was thinking only of the inner tone of Isis, which I cannot believe to be silent. There is an *ἀνάμνησις* here, which steals over one as it used. How we would kindle over problems of theology and philosophy, firmly persuaded that on these issues really did hang the welfare of mankind! And how our souls would glow in pursuing, as the Sangreal, some ideal of the true Church! What were the fat prizes of this world to us, the simper of society, the tug of party? Hark! I hear the old bell strike, and do not the grey stones of Magdalen tower glimmer softly through this veil of the first leaflets? How often has the same measured note struck upon our ears, as we paddled down sleepy Cherwell musing, or listened for the nightingales in the moonlight! It seemed to take up its parable and say, "Whither, whither?" as we were dreaming things visionary, it may be, but things of the eternal spirit; and it had spoken the same words to others dreaming like things, generation after generation, for so many ages under such different creeds. I cannot think

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P. Ah! I heard that he had been moved from his philosophic perch to chastise us, and that he felt it a most painful duty. Is not that just what old Whackum used to tell us boys, as he was looking out his nastiest rod? How proud we were, notwithstanding, of the dear old doctor — were you in his time? — a deep scholar and a ripe one — shrewd, critical, wary; so kindly and simple too, though with not much faith left in anything but his books and his cane. How oracular he could be! and how he would shake his head at our young ardours, as who should say, "I could tell you a tale." But he never told it: a bit of a pessimist, yet a fine old scholar — peace to him! So the Rector has been studying Comte?

S. Dear me, no! but he has dipped into him here and there. We do not study a system of philosophy which we are going to refute.

P. Ah! I was forgetting your critical prerogatives. Well, and from what theological ground does he plant his batteries?

A man can hardly dispose of religion *ab extra*, as a passing stranger who drops in at a debating club. Before serious men will listen to him, he must tell them what he believes himself; and I had not thought that our good Rector would care to commit himself to a very distinct confession of doctrine.

S. Certainly not, of the Thirty-nine Articles or rubical sort; but he is in sympathy with those who cling to a philosophic theism, and he calls himself a theosophist.

P. It is something in these days to call yourself a theo-anything. Well! let us have the new theosophy. It will be the twentieth to which I have listened within six months. What tries me nowadays about philosophic theology is, that every theologian has a new account of the Divine Essence, just as every critic has at last found out the secret of Hamlet.

S. That is not our fault. The article shows you how science day by day narrows the sphere of theology; so that philosophy has to be perpetually fining down the idea of deity. The Rector has a wonderful phrase for this process. He says it "defecates the idea to a pure transparency."

P. Well, that is one way of deodorising religion! And is this patent process what you call philosophical Christianity?

S. Pooh! no. Philosophical Christianity is as dead as a door-mat. The Rector says as much. He speaks of the "liberal clergymen" as lurking about like a gang of gipsies. We have given up all that. *Essays and Reviews* finished it off.

P. And what do you call your method?

S. Philosophical theism, I tell you, a very different thing.

P. Philosophical theism! That does not mean the Jehovah of the Pentateuch, the Providence of country sermons?

S. Tut, tut, man! though we do live in Oxford, we are not blind to the progress of criticism, science, and I may say morality. The Rector has read too much not to know that

the old notion, "the omni-present, omnipotent, benevolent Creator and Providence, presents speculative difficulties, and is not easily combined with our present habits of scientific thought."

P. Well, then, what becomes of your theism when you have got so far as that?

S. Why, "we retain our hold upon the idea of God, without bringing it into flat collision with other admitted truth."

P. But is not that to divest God of every one of the attributes which make up God?

S. The vulgar conception of His attributes possibly; but then we retain the philosophic idea of God.

P. So you might retain the idea of phlogiston, whilst assuring us that it has none of those qualities of phlogiston which science declares to be nonsense. But what is the good of the idea?

S. Why, this, that it enables us to save a field for theology.

P. But I thought that you admitted that religion must conform to the methods of science?

S. Quite so. They extend their sway over the whole of the knowable.

P. And do the methods of science supply you with a positive theology?

S. Far from it. As to that, the Rector goes as far as any one; he will tell you "that a completed and developed mastery of the order of nature shows that there is no room within it for the idea of God."

P. Well, then, what becomes of your idea?

S. Why, it is to be found outside of the order of nature, of course; science cannot question it there. Its domain is purely transcendental.

P. Does the Rector commit himself to that?

S. Well, to tell you the truth, the article is not so explicit

as could be wished on that topic. But the deduction from it is very obvious. If positive science extends over the whole of the knowable, and if positive science has no room within it for theology, of course theology must be outside of the knowable.

P. But in that case is not your theology rather vague?

S. It is no doubt vague; but then we "evade our difficulties" without parting with the existence of God.

P. It is rather an infinitesimal residuum surely, and somewhat ethereal for the business of life? This is more like Voysey's expurgated deity, than the Rector's good sense. You say that in the face of modern thought there are difficulties in believing in an omnipotent and benevolent Creator and Providence. Really, your idea of God seems to me curiously close to the idea that there is no God. Ought you not now to call your system Atheosophy rather than Theosophy?

S. Oh, what a materialist you are! you persist in forgetting that we retain the idea.

P. But as Aristotle says of Plato's idea, what is the good of an idea which is *μάταιον*, standing in no relation to mundane things?

S. Why, it separates us by a gulf from all who do not acknowledge God.

P. But you merely leap into the gulf! To ejaculate a surmise is not to possess a religion. Matthew Arnold gave you good advice in his lectures on Bishop Butler, when he said, "Religion must be built upon ideas about which there is no puzzle," and I will take leave to add, on ideas to which a meaning is attached. If you read him, you will see how, in that light-glancing way of his, he shows you into what confusion you are thrown when once you embark on metaphysical arguments "for an intelligent author of nature with a will

and a character." You see to what your philosophy leads you when pushed to its limits by a clear, fearless spirit like his.

S. Matthew Arnold! the prince of critics, and a charming poet; but his stream of tendency loses itself in the sands of Pantheism. Pantheism is the religion of poets; but it cannot be the religion of nations.

P. Quite so; and do you think that your philosophic deity ever can be? Are men and women to love, obey, and pray to a being for whom you are ready to disclaim every attribute which science may doubt, whom you do not assert to be Almighty, nor All-good, but an inscrutable and negative Essence, never obtruding His personality, and philosophically neutral in human concerns? I have no taste myself for a *grand Peut-être*, and as Arnold keenly tells you, all your efforts to expound your *Peut-être* will not get further than a sense of mere puzzled submission. And so he implores you, as you hope for salvation, to acknowledge only an impersonal stream of tendency.

S. Never! so long as we hold on by the idea of Person, so long we shall have the only possible germ of religion.

P. What! though you "evade your difficulties," as you so candidly call it, by conceding to science or philosophy that your Person is not the omnipotent Creator and Providence? Your idea is too like what we lawyers call the *scintilla juris*, or the *tabula in naufragio*. So the feeble race of men, buffeted on every side by the rising waves of positive science, are to hold on by this "contingent remainder," this thin possibility, which is not in flat collision with science, I presume because it presents nothing against which science or anything else can collide.

S. Oh! you are always for bringing religion into the streets. I suppose the vulgar will keep their gross beliefs; for of course a philosophical deity is only for philosophers.

to the words. It is candid to the present, and throws a halo over the selected portion of the past. It brings down all the influence of grand and hallowed phrases upon minds enfeebled by a long training upon sentences and words. It offers imposing theories of mankind made musical with poetry and text to the young brains who are just constructing their first or second "Philosophy of Being." It offers them a bright, not too systematic view of human goodness, and it frees them from the thralldom of intellectual convictions.

That such a view should have success in such an atmosphere is natural enough. We deny, however, that it can have a chance of success with the men and women around us, or that it bears the remotest resemblance to religions or faiths which sustain societies and nations. It acknowledges in sad and eloquent words the prevailing antagonism between our intellectual convictions and our religious professions. It hopes to mitigate the evil by thrusting the intellectual behind the moral element of the belief. The doctrine it leaves as possibly erroneous and comparatively unimportant; it sums up the Gospels in the practice of the Christian life. This is a wide-spread and very attractive modification, but it is one in which most faiths have eventually terminated. The old polytheism, undermined for ages, ended in the visions of Neo-Platonism. Hypatia confronting Cyril could show the beauty and the soul of the ancient faith, and surrendering the mythology, interpreted its meaning. The later Buddhism and Sufism of India show the same dilution of the doctrines of Sakya and Mohammed. The Quietists spiritualised Catholicism into a moral perfection, the Wesleyans spiritualised Protestantism into an ecstasy of the soul. Around us the same process is renewed. Presbyterians, Quakers, and Unitarians are casting off the dead frame of their tenets, and seeking to revitalise the essence.

It seems strange in the present day to be insisting that religious societies must be held together by common opinions, convictions, and schemes of belief, and not by common feelings or practices. Every religion which ever flourished did so by the strength of a body of doctrine and a system of definite axioms. Nothing else could give unity and permanence to its teaching. No collection of maxims or rules of life can last very long when deprived of dogmatic basis and common intellectual assent. The whole teaching and influence of every religion has rested ultimately and entirely on cardinal propositions universally received as true. The authority of the Catholic priest rested mainly on the sacraments — these latter on the scheme of redemption, and that on the divinity of Christ. St. Bernard knew how much his moral power rested on the notion of Transubstantiation; it was through that very dogma that the whole Catholic system was attacked. Nothing but such a basis can satisfy the mind of the inquirer or give coherence to the social body. Moral principles have been found to lead to strife when made the foundation of communities. They cannot be preserved from distortion through every character which receives them, and put no check on intellectual superstructures which utterly overwhelm them. Endless attempts have been made towards union in an ideal life. They have ended invariably in chimera and confusion.

It is far from a new thing to propose as a religion the following of the Christian life. It has been done before by orthodox mystics and protesting Waldenses, by Moravians and Latter-Day Saints, by À-Kempis, by Fox, by Fénelon, and by Wesley. Indeed, this is so obvious, that it will hardly be thought possible that our authors can have forgotten it. We are far from saying that they have fallen into the mysticism which has misled many admirable spirits; but what they

maintain is built upon the same unstable basis. In this last essay at least there is a deliberate attempt to admit the doctrine as uncertain and transitory, and to bind together the faithful by the imitation of one great ideal. Creeds are discredited as accidental and variable, principles as essential and eternal. The moment one cardinal dogma is surrendered as uncertain or even as provisional, the whole intellectual framework gives way. All the repose, the unity, all the permanence which rest upon undoubted truths are gone. The unguided feelings, the variety and fluctuation of moral conceptions, take their place in endless agitation and discord.

Such a work, indeed, undoes the labour of St. Paul, brought to perfection by the Church. He taught Faith, Hope, and Charity, insisting, indeed, chiefly on the moral truth, but resting it on a system of immutable doctrine. He preached a life of righteousness in this world to be followed by certain glory in the next. He preached "Christ, and Him crucified." Once doubt the certainty of the story or the reality of the sacrifice, and to what will the preacher appeal? He will be left to the truism, "To be good, for it is good to be good." It is useless now to repeat that the whole martyrology itself, stripped of miracle or fable, is left in hopeless perplexity. It is of more use to point out how far that ideal is made up (as, for instance, in the Sermon on the Mount) of those "counsels of perfection" and of that "personal salvation" which are in this book rejected as impossible or immoral. Subtract, indeed, from that all hyper-Christian precepts and the whole theory of the life in heaven, and what remains as a residuum? Not assuredly a religion — a picture of humility, gentleness, and love, a body of beautiful maxims, the ideal of tender hearts and spotless consciences. It is not this which can bring order out of the intellectual anarchy around us,

control the whole moral energy of the present, and heal the deep diseases in societies and states.

Our account of this book would be incomplete unless we were to point to the reception it has received. It has passed through two editions, it has been read and discussed within and without the Church, with the hesitation of reflection or the pleasure of surprise. Nowhere has there been seen or heard a sign of official repudiation. These professors, tutors, principles, and masters still hold their chairs and retain their influence. No authorised rebuke has been put forward. They have been left to the bark of the toothless watchdogs of orthodoxy. The authorities of the Universities are paralysed, and incapable even of a protest. They have had the pain of seeing nearly all the brain and heart of their foundations ranged on the other side; they seem to have issued an order of the day to ignore so painful a subject. In the meantime, many of the younger members have received it with welcome and assent, many also with welcome, but with slight assent. Indeed, no one that knows the religious state of the Universities could doubt that such a book would be eagerly welcomed, but welcomed only as a partial instalment. Few, perhaps, are aware how far the decay of belief extends beneath those walls.

These are not the days of metaphysical atheism or pedantic logic (at least, out of the ranks of official apologists). It is the ablest, the sincerest, and the best who feel their faith giving way beneath them. The Church is losing now at once the best heads and the best hearts. It is character, influence, and sympathy with mankind, which now mark those who stand aloof. Are not these seven authors worthy representatives of the best of their order? Others as high in place and influence have spoken less, but have not therefore thought less. Perhaps, if they have been silent, they have found it still

more difficult to speak. This volume draws a sad picture of the prevalence of intellectual doubt within those cloisters. That picture is far short of the reality. "Smouldering scepticism," indeed! When they are honeycombed with disbelief, running through every phase from mystical interpretation to utter atheism. Professors, tutors, fellows, and pupils are conscious of this wide-spread doubt. In silence they watch and respect each other's thoughts, and silently work out their own. Above them sit unconscious dignities and powers vaguely condemning pantheism and neology, or piecing the articles together with scraps of accommodating texts. Such are those seminaries of the Priesthood and the Church, and he who has passed through them has seen the circles of an intellectual purgatory.

How long shall this last? The vague intellectual craving, the waste of moral purpose, the sense of blank indifference, are felt even more strongly there than in the world around us. Few indeed now hesitate to see the ultimate source of nearly all social confusion in this severance of reason and religion — this gulf which divides the highest thinking from the highest feeling. It is made far more deadly by the hypocrisy of concealment or the torpor of indifference. It must be a profound evil that all thinking men should reject a national religion. It is almost worse that they should falsely pretend to accept it. In what a network of contrary influences is our daily life passed. All the tenderer and holier of our ties lead one way; all the stronger and more rational, another. The home, the school, and the Church touch chords in our hearts. Life, thought, and society nullify and dispel their teaching. The newspaper, the review, the tale by every fireside, is written almost exclusively by men who have long ceased to believe. So also the school-book, the text-book, the manuals for study of youth and manhood, the whole mental food of the day;

science, history, morals, and politics, poetry, fiction, and essay; the very lesson of the school, the very sermon from the pulpit. And all this is done beneath a solemn or cynical hypocrisy.

How long shall this last? How long must there be bitterness of heart in every household, and a hardened despair in every vigorous brain? How long shall the mother's words fall coldly on the ear of the son — the prayers of the wife be unmeaning to the husband — the grey hairs of the preacher scarcely save him from contempt? And (far worse) the masses lie in brutal heathenism, whilst great minds run to seed in selfish, because irreligious efforts? Until men have the courage to bury their dead convictions out of sight, and the greater courage to form new. All honour to these writers for the boldness with which they have, at great risk, urged their opinions. But what is wanted is strength not merely to face the world, but to face one's own conclusions. It is well to say what one really believes. It is better to believe what one really thinks. Even more necessary now than courage in act is honesty in thought. We need that rectitude and tenacity of mind which abhors to deceive itself; and works out the issues of its reasoning without flinching and without fainting. We know the cost. The sense of despair, the shudder of the mind, the tearing up of dear associations, the agony of the family, have darkened the picture of every religious convulsion. It must be endured. Let every one with hearts and brains concur in the inevitable task. Let each who has thought and felt for himself ask himself first what he *does not* believe, and then, if wise or needful, avow it. Next let him ask himself what he *does* believe, and pursue it to its true and full conclusions. Let violent attack be avoided, but the mask of conformity cast off. May no honest mind be disturbed, but let hollow peace be rejected.

If we have spoken strongly, few of our readers are likely to be quite at rest, whilst many are being drawn towards a premature compromise. Let such reflect that no half-measures will succeed. Neither loose accommodation nor sonorous principles will long give them rest. It is of as little use to surrender the more glaring contradictions of science as it is to evaporate a discredited doctrine into a few vague precepts. Religion, to regain the world, must not only be not contrary to science but it must be in entire and close harmony with science. Not with one science only, but with all. Not only must it have a place beside philosophy, morals, and politics; but it must guide and elevate all these. Religion, to have strength, must have a doctrine; and a doctrine, to endure now, must embody the outgrowth of human thought. If it be not distinctly proved therefrom, it must at least flow from and sum up the whole. Its intellectual basis must be broad and unimpeachable. The highest efforts of the brain must guide the best promptings of the heart. That end will not be attained by our authors, by subliming religion into an emotion, and making an armistice with science. It will not be obtained by any unreal adaptation, nor by this, which is of all recent adaptations, at once the most able, the most earnest, and — the most suicidal.

IV

A SOCRATIC DIALOGUE

1876

The following Dialogue appeared in the "Contemporary Review," May 1876, vol. xxvii. It was an answer to an article by Mark Pattison, Rector of Lincoln. It occasioned a prolonged controversy with John Ruskin, who wrote on it in "Fors Clavigera," May 1876, vol. vi., reissued in the "Complete Ruskin," vol. xxxix., where the correspondence relating to it, both public and private, is reproduced. The answer to Mr. Ruskin appeared in the "Fortnightly Review," July 1876, "Past and Present," and is reproduced in the "Choice of Books," 1886.

PERSONS:

SOPHISTES, a College Don

PHÆDRUS, a barrister from town

(At Oxford: The Walks round Magdalen College in May)

Sophistes. Ah! most positive of men, what happy chance brings you back to our studious groves? 'Tis pleasant to find you meditating here, in the old haunts amid the May blossoms.

Phædrus. Nay, son of sweetness and light, there is no place in which I feel more truly at home. I often fancy that the *genius loci* touches us strangers more deeply than it can you residents who have it always with you. I have but just

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S. You mean a land where it is always — the middle of last week.

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the old lines of religious rest. And with this assurance of peace, we have what comes now not always to thoughtful men — I mean the sense of correspondence between our devotional and our speculative hours, as also between our religion and our active lives. I will do what I can to make my faith prevail; but I hope to avoid all paroxysms, and to keep on good terms with reasonable and honest men.

S. Well then, we will think of no more bonfires in the Broad Street, and you shall be neither stoker nor fuel. Let us proceed by way of academic dialectic; for which purpose here is the walk beside the mill-stream and dull Cherwell, "which faileth oft through faint and feeble plight." I am full of the attack upon your creed by the Rector of Lincoln, in the March *Contemporary*, and I want to hear what you can say in answer to it.

P. Ah! I heard that he had been moved from his philosophic perch to chastise us, and that he felt it a most painful duty. Is not that just what old Whackum used to tell us boys, as he was looking out his nastiest rod? How proud we were, notwithstanding, of the dear old doctor — were you in his time? — a deep scholar and a ripe one — shrewd, critical, wary; so kindly and simple too, though with not much faith left in anything but his books and his cane. How oracular he could be! and how he would shake his head at our young ardours, as who should say, "I could tell you a tale." But he never told it: a bit of a pessimist, yet a fine old scholar — peace to him! So the Rector has been studying Comte?

S. Dear me, no! but he has dipped into him here and there. We do not study a system of philosophy which we are going to refute.

P. Ah! I was forgetting your critical prerogatives. Well, and from what theological ground does he plant his batteries?

A man can hardly dispose of religion *ab extra*, as a passing stranger who drops in at a debating club. Before serious men will listen to him, he must tell them what he believes himself; and I had not thought that our good Rector would care to commit himself to a very distinct confession of doctrine.

S. Certainly not, of the Thirty-nine Articles or rubical sort; but he is in sympathy with those who cling to a philosophic theism, and he calls himself a theosophist.

P. It is something in these days to call yourself a theosophist. Well! let us have the new theosophy. It will be the twentieth to which I have listened within six months. What tries me nowadays about philosophic theology is, that every theologian has a new account of the Divine Essence, just as every critic has at last found out the secret of Hamlet.

S. That is not our fault. The article shows you how science day by day narrows the sphere of theology; so that philosophy has to be perpetually fining down the idea of deity. The Rector has a wonderful phrase for this process. He says it "defecates the idea to a pure transparency."

P. Well, that is one way of deodorising religion! And is this patent process what you call philosophical Christianity?

S. Pooh! no. Philosophical Christianity is as dead as a door-mat. The Rector says as much. He speaks of the "liberal clergymen" as lurking about like a gang of gipsies. We have given up all that. *Essays and Reviews* finished it off.

P. And what do you call your method?

S. Philosophical theism, I tell you, a very different thing.

P. Philosophical theism! That does not mean the Jehovah of the Pentateuch, the Providence of country sermons?

S. Tut, tut, man! though we do live in Oxford, we are not blind to the progress of criticism, science, and I may say morality. The Rector has read too much not to know that

the old notion, "the omni-present, omnipotent, benevolent Creator and Providence, presents speculative difficulties, and is not easily combined with our present habits of scientific thought."

P. Well, then, what becomes of your theism when you have got so far as that?

S. Why, "we retain our hold upon the idea of God, without bringing it into flat collision with other admitted truth."

P. But is not that to divest God of every one of the attributes which make up God?

S. The vulgar conception of His attributes possibly; but then we retain the philosophic idea of God.

P. So you might retain the idea of phlogiston, whilst assuring us that it has none of those qualities of phlogiston which science declares to be nonsense. But what is the good of the idea?

S. Why, this, that it enables us to save a field for theology.

P. But I thought that you admitted that religion must conform to the methods of science?

S. Quite so. They extend their sway over the whole of the knowable.

P. And do the methods of science supply you with a positive theology?

S. Far from it. As to that, the Rector goes as far as any one; he will tell you "that a completed and developed mastery of the order of nature shows that there is no room within it for the idea of God."

P. Well, then, what becomes of your idea?

S. Why, it is to be found outside of the order of nature, of course; science cannot question it there. Its domain is purely transcendental.

P. Does the Rector commit himself to that?

S. Well, to tell you the truth, the article is not so explicit

as could be wished on that topic. But the deduction from it is very obvious. If positive science extends over the whole of the knowable, and if positive science has no room within it for theology, of course theology must be outside of the knowable.

P. But in that case is not your theology rather vague?

S. It is no doubt vague; but then we "evade our difficulties" without parting with the existence of God.

P. It is rather an infinitesimal residuum surely, and somewhat ethereal for the business of life? This is more like Voysey's expurgated deity, than the Rector's good sense. You say that in the face of modern thought there are difficulties in believing in an omnipotent and benevolent Creator and Providence. Really, your idea of God seems to me curiously close to the idea that there is no God. Ought you not now to call your system Atheosophy rather than Theosophy?

S. Oh, what a materialist you are! you persist in forgetting that we retain the idea.

P. But as Aristotle says of Plato's idea, what is the good of an idea which is *μάταιον*, standing in no relation to mundane things?

S. Why, it separates us by a gulf from all who do not acknowledge God.

P. But you merely leap into the gulf! To ejaculate a surmise is not to possess a religion. Matthew Arnold gave you good advice in his lectures on Bishop Butler, when he said, "Religion must be built upon ideas about which there is no puzzle," and I will take leave to add, on ideas to which a meaning is attached. If you read him, you will see how, in that light-glancing way of his, he shows you into what confusion you are thrown when once you embark on metaphysical arguments "for an intelligent author of nature with a will

and a character." You see to what your philosophy leads you when pushed to its limits by a clear, fearless spirit like his.

S. Matthew Arnold! the prince of critics, and a charming poet; but his stream of tendency loses itself in the sands of Pantheism. Pantheism is the religion of poets; but it cannot be the religion of nations.

P. Quite so; and do you think that your philosophic deity ever can be? Are men and women to love, obey, and pray to a being for whom you are ready to disclaim every attribute which science may doubt, whom you do not assert to be Almighty, nor All-good, but an inscrutable and negative Essence, never obtruding His personality, and philosophically neutral in human concerns? I have no taste myself for a *grand Peut-être*, and as Arnold keenly tells you, all your efforts to expound your *Peut-être* will not get further than a sense of mere puzzled submission. And so he implores you, as you hope for salvation, to acknowledge only an impersonal stream of tendency.

S. Never! so long as we hold on by the idea of Person, so long we shall have the only possible germ of religion.

P. What! though you "evade your difficulties," as you so candidly call it, by conceding to science or philosophy that your Person is not the omnipotent Creator and Providence? Your idea is too like what we lawyers call the *scintilla juris*, or the *tabula in naufragio*. So the feeble race of men, buffeted on every side by the rising waves of positive science, are to hold on by this "contingent remainder," this thin possibility, which is not in flat collision with science, I presume because it presents nothing against which science or anything else can collide.

S. Oh! you are always for bringing religion into the streets. I suppose the vulgar will keep their gross beliefs; for of course a philosophical deity is only for philosophers.

This is the religion of Research, and it saves us at least from the abruptness of Atheism, in which predicament I say thou stand'st.

P. And therein, saving your abruptness, I hold you quite unreasonable. There is more atheism in these philosophical theisms than in all the writings of Comte. Men go on criticising and refining away the Divine attributes, denying that He is the God of the Hebrews, or of the Gospels, or any commonplace Creator or Providence; they protest against the anthropomorphic tendencies of the ignorant, and insist that they do not mean by God what the common mean. One theosophist will have nothing to do with a God capable of designing eternal punishment; another is scandalised at the idea of a God whose wrath can be appeased by sacrifice; a third cries that, if God made a hell for such as he, to hell he will go. A great logician has proved out of Hamilton that God is Absolute, and cannot be understood by such finite beings as we are; and a great lawyer has proved out of Bentham that God is not so much Love as Justice, and so we had better beware. The popular preachers, however, talk about God as a mere abstraction of Love; whilst one of the pillars of the Church has just shown us, that we shall never understand the Bible, so long as we fancy that God is a Person who thinks and loves. And now the Rector, you say — one of our wisest and best-stored heads — shows us how philosophy “defecates the idea to a pure transparency.” Now, when I see all this around me, and find so much of what is acute and so much of what is devout in our age vying thus in defecating the old, and I will say, the grand conception of the God of our fathers, I feel that it is going, slipping, evaporating. Do you remember how Arnold told us that the spirit of the time, or as he will have it, the *Zeitgeist*, had touched the old orthodoxy? Well, it seems to me that the *Zeitgeist*, if our

language is not provided with a better term, has touched your idea too.

S. And has Comte done nothing to add to this chaos?

P. Nothing is more alien to the spirit of Positivism than all these theosophies and atheosophies. Comte does not go on refining as to what God certainly is not, paring down and corroding the old notion of Godhead in the service of piety. He never spoke more in earnest than when he said that atheism is the most irrational kind of theology. He does not syllogise about the origin of things, but he goes straight to the practical work of religion, the Power above us in its bearing on conduct and life. As to the origin of all things he condemns those who assert that they never had a Creator, even more than those who try to persuade themselves that they know all about some *ὄντως ὄν* somewhere at the bottom of the abyss of Chaos.

S. Ah! that is what is so singular in your position. You will have nothing to say to philosophical deism, and those who adapt Christianity to modern criticism; and yet you are quite tolerant towards crude orthodoxy, and even, to be plain, to the rampant superstition of Catholicism.

P. Why, just for this reason. In whittling down your deity to the true philosophic nullity, and adapting Christianity until nothing is left of the original, you are only making a hollow truce with criticism, whilst you are destroying the body and bones of religion. The institutions, discipline, and worship of religion may certainly be organised around a living sense of an omnipotent Creator, if you retain it. But do you suppose that anything to be called a religion can find its Providence in this *scintilla Numinis* which you think you can detect by powerful philosophical telescopes, somewhere I suppose in the *nebula* of Orion? Religion does not mean a hypothetical solution of a logical dilemma. It means the

devotion of our life to the supreme Master of our life; but under this sceptical theosophy the sense of real Providence, of the giver and governor of all our acts, is being destroyed in men's minds. To us this is the soul of religion. The orthodox faiths, and especially what you are pleased so elegantly to call the rampant superstition, do keep up this tradition, their uncritical creeds notwithstanding. Their uncritical creeds are dissolving of themselves under the *mitraille* that is poured on them by you and your friends; and even if they are not dissolving, it is no part of ours to undermine working religions. But your theisms and your atheisms are making all religion impossible.

S. Gently, my friend, or you will push me in your vehemence straight into the Cherwell. Come, now; let us keep on the footpath, for you are turning the position with your *furia francese* and putting me on my defence, when we agreed that you should defend and explain your Positivism. I am in all these things simply critical; nor am I going to quit my vantage ground of contemplative speculation; and I take it that is the wise Rector's position. We do not care for Churches or sects; this philosophical theism is after all only an intellectual problem to us. Suppose I grant you that it is not practicable as a popular religion, not adapted to the masses, not a working thing at all. That does not affect it as a cultivated theorem. Happily, all ideas are not yet required to be put to vulgar use, in spite of the utilitarianism of some of our friends. So show me, if you please, that your doctrine of Humanity is anything but a phrase. You have made such havoc of the metaphysical deities, that it is fit you should prove your own to be a whit less metaphysical. After all, our *scintilla Numinis* is at least as solid a thing as your *imago Hominis*.

P. I think I can show you that Humanity is a perfectly

real thing, if only you will not assume that it is a deity, and will simply look to the ordinary facts about civilisation. What do you understand, now, by this word civilisation?

S. The gradual development of man's nature by the improvement of society, generation after generation.

P. And we can trace this development back by infinite gradations to the earliest appearance of man?

S. Certainly, that follows from modern doctrines of development.

P. And you do not suppose that any single generation or any given society is the original and sole inventor of its own moral, intellectual, or practical condition; but that it has framed this condition out of the materials supplied to it by previous ages?

S. Most certainly. But why all this to me? Is not the doctrine of evolution the great achievement of our time? Comte's crude law of the three stages, as the Rector says, has been superseded by the doctrine of evolution. You will hardly tell me that Comte is the author of that?

P. Nay, this is a little too much! You will be telling me next that Newton did not know the law of gravitation. No one more truly ever grasped in its entirety the notion of evolution. I cannot ask you to read two large works before you refute them; but if you turn to the first words of Comte's philosophy of history, you will see that he calls the entire course of civilisation a collective evolution of the human race, which is itself, he says, but a prolongation of the entire series seen in the whole scale of living nature. Will you tell me that the man who opens his account of history with these words had no notion of evolution?

S. Well, be it so. However, I think I can save you trouble by assuring you that I do most heartily accept the doctrine of evolution as the whole and sole basis of human

history, and do from my heart abjure that damnable and dangerous doctrine that human things come about by accident, inspiration, or any other spontaneous way, without antecedents and without sequence.

P. Good! I thought there could be little to divide us there. Then you will quite agree that the history of mankind discloses to us a vast consensus of efforts embracing every faculty of human nature; that with much of waste and much of antagonism in minor parts these efforts are seen to co-operate in the long run, and to evolve collective results; that this consensus, visible in all our human manifestations of power, has two co-ordinate forms: in the first place one successive in time by which the products and thoughts of one generation or age are transmitted or worked up into those of its successors; secondly, and in a far less degree, one by which the coexisting generations of men, extended throughout space on our planet, in some sort of way transmit and exchange products and influences, act and react on each other, and work out collective results?

S. Very true; but is there anything new in all this?

P. Nor did we ever pretend that it was new. However, I see that you adopt as fully as any of us the truth that the whole course of human civilisation is a collective evolution.

S. Assuredly; but you are a long way yet from your divinity.

P. I shall not say anything about a divinity. All that I want you to do is to follow out in all its concrete results this sense of collective evolution. See how it shapes your life, material, intellectual, moral; how this transcendent power holds you in the hollow of its hand. Stand now and cast your eyes round this sweet landscape, with its myriad blossoms and foliage, its meadows in their golden glory, and the uplands far away there in their springtide trim. Conceive

what it once was: dank and slab from the glacial age, a formless ooze, a tangle of dull bush. What countless generations of men toiled and died in the taming and the clearing, in the damming and the planting of this wilderness, before it could grow into this grove which thy soul loveth. Where are they who brought in ships to this island, reared, and trained all this stately timber and these various blossoms from all climes? Those flowers and plants which we can see between the cloisters and trellised around the grey traceries, what races of men in China, Japan, India, Mexico, South America, Australasia, first developed their glory out of some wild bloom? You see there calmly grazing the cows, the horse, and you hear the miller's dog baying in his yard. With what infinite toil were these creatures won to man's service. Have not their bodies and their tempers, their habits and intelligence, been developed and transformed by countless generations? See that boat below the mill-race; consider that water-wheel alone: what thought, what patience, what suffering, have gone to the building of these simplest of our machines? what a story of inherited human skill do they not tell? Consider the very language we are using; think of that one word *civilisation*, and all that it suggests, from the first village life of hunters to the mighty organisation of Egyptian cities, the majestic memory of Rome, and thence down to the variety of modern industry. Hear those chimes from Magdalen tower for the Sunday evensong. Sunday, Sabbath, Lord's Day! Into what a world of its own does that word carry us back — the vast evolution of religion! Nay, in fine, consider the infinite succession of ages and the variety of races to which the mind is carried back by the daily routine of this place — so far truly a university — the freshman puzzling over the problems of an Alexandrian Greek, or the scuffles of herdsmen round the Seven Hills; the candidate for orders steeped in the

languages and the ritualisms of oriental mystics; and you, my critical friend, worthy of your university, with your far-reaching knowledge of men's thoughts growing through countless generations.

S. Hold! A truce to your compliments and your catalogue. I see it all, admit it, know it. You will remind me of one of Walt Whitman's endless lists of all things if you go on.

P. But is it not perfectly real and provable fact?

S. Undoubtedly; it is a mere deduction from the principle of evolution, though I do not go about the world, as you seem to do, thinking of Cadmus when I take up a book, and of Confucius when I drink my tea.

P. Perhaps because your *scintilla Numinis* makes you unmindful of those to whom your best goods are due. But all I now ask is, if it be not a perfectly real force, whether you see in it the hand of deity or not?

S. Yes! it is a very real force; but what then?

P. Do you not see how completely it dominates us too? What would you and I be now if all that man has done and thought since the days of the Cave Bear were blotted out? And can any individual, any generation even, struggle against it, or turn it back for more than a season? Will not the course of civilisation at length sweep on as a uniform current?

S. Undoubtedly; men and groups of men may modify civilisation by working with it, but they cannot permanently distort it.

P. Well, then, you will admit that this consensus of human energy which imposes itself upon your every thought, feeling, and act, and makes your life what it is, waking or sleeping, is, speaking simply in a human sense, a dominant power?

S. Yes, it is a power, if you do not want any big P, just

as much as the development of industry is a power, or the progress of education is a power.

P. Precisely so; and all I ask you to admit is, that the course of human civilisation is by far the most vast and permanent power of the kind, embracing them all, and having a universality which none of them have.

S. I quite agree. No one who takes a scientific view of society can doubt that there is this omnipresent power, the collective product of all human effort.

P. And do you not think this collective power of man's life is itself a majestic object of contemplation? Does not our imagination stir when we think of its immensity? Does not our intelligence triumph in its achievements? Do not our souls melt to remember its heroism and its sufferings? Are we not dust in comparison with that myriad-legged world of human lives which made us what we are? Every thinker who ever wore out his life, like Simon Stylites, on his lonely column of thought, was dreaming for us. Every prophet and king who raised up a new step in the stage of human advance raised the pyramid on which we stand. Every artist who ever lifted himself into the beautiful lifted us also. Nor was ever mother who loved her child in toil, tears, and pain, but was wrung for us. Each drop of sweat that ever fell from the brow of a worker has fattened the earth which we enjoy. Martyrs, heroes, poets, teachers, toilers — all contribute their share. Priests there in those churches would rest our whole religion upon the legend of pity on Calvary. They dwarf and narrow the range of our compassion. There were Nazarenes in many ages and in many climes, and Calvaries have been the landmarks of each succeeding phase of human story. Moses, Buddha, Confucius, St. Paul, Mahomet, the ideals and authors of every creed, have been but some of the Messiahs of the human race.

The history of every religion is but an episode in the history of humanity. Nor has any creed its noble army of martyrs which can compare with that roll of all the martyrs of Man.

S. *Ton dapameibomenos* — easy all a few minutes, and let me take this in. This is what you mean by your Comtist Calendar, then? and it is a real thing to you? Come, let us rest awhile whilst you recover your breath, which you have tried in rehearsing your saints. I should like to think it out. Come, let us sit beside the maythorn here, and listen to the polemical controversies of the rooks in these elms, and watch the deer as they swish their white tails in the sunlight. I wonder, now, if the rooks and the deer have a collective rook and deer-power shaping their lives.

P. No doubt they would have, if they had ever found out the secret of transmitting their thoughts and their productions to their descendants.

S. Softly, now! I feel this force you speak of winding itself round me. Well, no doubt there is a set of influences — real, and I grant you, collective. Does not this amount to what Arnold talks of, a stream of tendency?

P. It may be so, if Arnold would tell us how the stream of tendency is to be found. But you will observe that the collective power we speak of is a compound force, capable of exact description and analysis by history, and that it comprehends all the transmitted human forces which affect man's life permanently.

S. I see that, and I confess the power, but with no big P, mind you. I also grant that it is adapted very powerfully to affect the imagination and even the sympathies. But when you talk of reverencing it, surely this is sheer Pantheism, or at any rate a sort of sectional Pantheism, or I will call it a Pantanthropotheism?

P. Do you think so? What, now, do you mean by Pantheism?

S. The making an object of worship of the sum total of existence, of all the things we know.

P. And what do you hold to be the mischief of such a creed?

S. Vagueness, mysticism, unreality as a philosophy, loose sentimentality as a religion; and the end of it, probably, lawless immorality.

P. Wherein do you find this?

S. In the first place, the organic and the inorganic worlds, the human and the animal, the spiritual and the physical worlds, are so disparate and often in such flat antagonism, that any collective conception of *omne scibile* embracing all things, must be vague. So I say Pantheism is mere moonshine intellectually.

P. And morally?

S. Well, a great many things in nature I call horribly bad. I cannot love or worship earthquakes, typhoons, snakes, mosquitoes, or mad dogs; and I am still less prepared to feel a religious sentiment towards every human propensity, and almost every vice, as Walt Whitman says that he does.

P. I am wholly with you, but remark in passing that these are some of the difficulties to your idea. Pantheism is a bit of muddled sentiment; and if it ever got any hold, it would end in gross impurity, because it consecrates everything, good or bad, and from its vagueness makes all moral discipline impossible, as well as all concentration of life.

S. Come, we agree about Pantheism. But does your humanity avoid similar difficulties?

P. First, please to remember that kindred difficulties await all theosophies. But just reflect upon the very meaning of the word humanity. It suggests a plain contrast between the World and Man. Then it centres our reverence in that which is itself homogeneous; a real unity, which is also

moral, sympathetic, and benevolent. None but mystics pretend that about the universe, or even the planet, as wholes, there is a collective force; certainly no force at all homogeneous with man, or showing conceivable human feelings. But you admit that we can trace a collective and human life in the course of man's civilisation.

S. Yes, I quite admit that; but if your humanity takes in all men's doings, it will have some very black features.

P. But it does nothing of the kind. The vicious and destructive energies of man have been on the whole abortive, and are more and more absorbed, just as the health of a strong man restores the balance after a disease. The good energies alone find permanent incorporation in the course of civilisation. And thus humanity, as a whole, gives us a noble object of regard.

S. Still, not a Divine one.

P. Most certainly not: rational science completely discards any absolute ideas, and consequently cannot admit any thought of absolute perfection. The idea of humanity would not be real unless it were relatively, and not absolutely, great and good.

S. But does not the sense of reverence imply an object absolutely good and great.

P. No trained mind surely needs anything absolutely. The son and the daughter can reverence father and mother, without requiring them to be absolutely perfect beings. And humanity is greater and nobler than any father or any mother.

S. But how are we to know what is the good and great part of this human evolution? Is it not left as vague as any Pantheism?

P. It was no doubt vague, before any philosophy of history was possible. But it is now a practical thing. We

have an account of human civilisation, more or less complete, and about which no great differences exist. It is the business of sociology to make it yet clearer and more complete. If you want a concrete notion of it, you will find that in Comte's Calendar.

S. I have often referred to his calendar, and have found it wonderfully suggestive for historical purposes. I believe they sometimes use it to set questions for examinations here.

P. Well, then, if you look at it in its proper use, you will find in it a very living portraiture of that sum of human energies by the force of which we think, and live, and feel, as we now think, feel, and live this day.

S. Come now; I think I have been suffering you to steal under my guard in our dialectic fence. All that you have been telling me about humanity is really nothing more than our every-day notions about history and civilisation, at least as understood by all who know what sociology means, and who see laws and evolution in history. You simply give this a new and living form, although you take only the old materials. But, my dear fellow, this is mere common sense.

P. Quite so; I have always told you so.

S. But where is your extravagance, what the Rector calls your "officious zealotry," "the helpless absurdity" of your system? You are eluding me, pretending to be mere matter-of-fact. But I will have you now. Where is your big H, your Supreme Being, and all that? This, as the Rector says, is the bee in your bonnet, the crazy part of your doctrine. You have not said a word yet about a being.

P. Purposely so. I wished to show you that the sense of humanity as a collective power is a real thing, and also an object of grateful reverence, quite apart from any idea that it is a being at all. And the reality and majesty of this power must fill every generous and intelligent nature, so soon as it

ceases to fill itself with the husks of theosophies and metaphysics.

S. Very likely; but you shall not so escape me this time. To the big H you have appealed, and to the big H you shall go. I know that this word "being" will act upon you as on a man suspected of insanity, who will talk quite rationally till you hit on his special craze. I will not repeat half the things the Rector says of you, for he positively thinks that you have all got a monomania like dancing dervishes. He will tell you that you are "the bitterest foes to knowledge," and "hate all that can be called intellect, like a Spanish priest." He says your being is merely "a new idol," "a word," "a metaphysical simulacrum," "the hypocrisy of materialism," "a helpless absurdity," "a meaningless thing of which your understanding must be ashamed."

P. Goodness! Does the Rector use all these ugly words about us?

S. Oh, yes! and many more. You cannot complain, I am sure; some of you once were rather hard on his *Essays and Reviews*.

P. Dear me! *tantæne animis cælestibus iræ!* I thought our dear Rector was one of those genial spirits who dwell in contemplation, and have a pious horror of controversy. But what will not these meditative beings do, when they come down from their calm heights?

S. Come now! never mind the Rector's vocabulary; I want to know why you call humanity a being?

P. Upon my word, you overwhelm me. Such a cataract of hard things: "mad," "meaningless," "absurdity," "hypocrisy." I am drenched, exhausted with your shower-bath; which, if it is not controversy, is curiously like controversy. Let me shake my dripping senses, and recover my breath. Come, let us have a turn or two round the clois-

ters; and see, the evening service is beginning. Shall we go in, and sit in the ante-chapel, my favourite spot, where we can listen to the choir from without, as if we were studying a noble dead religion? Here, beside the tombs, we shall hear the roll of ages when the organ peals, and dream of angel voices soaring to a purer region in the anthem. What Aristotle says of tragedy is so true of all sacred poetry and art: its business is to purify the soul with pity. We will hear the sublime old psalms and glorias, calm our spirits, drop controversies off from us like a bad dream; and then, when we come forth robed in joy and peace, as with a wedding garment, I will try if I can show you what I find in Humanity as a being to reverence.

(Evensong in Magdalen Chapel.)

P. I feel soothed and inspired by that service. Do you suppose that all that congregation actively believe in the Divine Being?

S. No doubt most of them do in a sort of way; every man in his own way.

P. Every man picturing Him after his own mental condition? And is their picture from the point of view of science real and true?

S. Well, we who have thought and studied say not. Philosophic theists naturally believe the reality behind to be something infinitely more subtle and sublimated than the gross ideas of the multitude.

P. And yet you tell me that it is ridiculous to expect men to worship an abstract idea. But I will show you that Humanity is a reality.

S. Yes, that is what you have to do. We admit that Humanity is an aggregate of men, and ideally a multitude of

many units; but it is no more a being than the sea or the firmament are beings.

P. What do you understand by the word being?

S. Oh! a palpable living personality.

P. Gently! do you mean that deity is palpable, or that an elephant is not a being?

S. Well, then, a being is a living organism.

P. Quite so; and what constitutes an organism in the scientific sense?

S. Oh! pardon me, I make no pretensions to be a biologist. We are discussing religion, not physics.

P. In other words, when you reiterate that humanity is not a being, you are not very clear what a being is. But, since you admit that religion must conform to scientific methods, let us see what, according to science, really constitutes an organism or being. Wherever you find an aggregate of homogeneous parts, all having mutual dependence and reaction, communicating and exchanging reciprocal services, all of which adapt themselves to the enviroing conditions, and also adapt themselves to each other and to the requirements of the whole, and where organ and function are combined to a growing and everchanging common end suitable to the general conditions, there you certainly have *organisation*. A crystal may be exquisitely symmetrical, but its units cannot exchange effects and modify each other; the Gulf Stream has myriads of globules sweeping on in a uniform current, but there is no organ and function, or reciprocal action of parts; the firmament of stars has multitudes of systems of curious complexity and beauty, but we know of no correspondence between its systems. None of these grow; there is none of that internal modification, that adjustment of diverse parts to each other's work, and of the whole to its environment, which we call organisation. Now, a

human body has all this. It is formed of living cells and units; it has different but analogous organs; these organs perform different functions; these functions are mutually related; this does one work, and that does another; and the whole system does a totally different and greater work, and one adapted to its conditions. The various organs have a power of self-adaption; they can increase their internal mechanism; they increase in force, volume, and complexity. The whole system does the same. And both organ and organism exhibit a power of adjusting themselves to new conditions. Over and above all this there is a series of apparatus by which the correspondence of organ and function, of organ and organ, and of organism and environment, is maintained and regulated. But every one of these conditions is found in the social organism as much as in the individual organism. The social organism is formed of living units, varying, but homogeneous. The units form groups in societies, each fulfilling its own function; the social functions correspond to and aid each other. The groups of social forces show a wonderful power of adaptability, of recuperative and developing faculty. A society is far more complex than an individual. It is harder to destroy; more able to grow; more versatile; fitter to throw up new members, and to replace old ones. Over and above this, society is far more permanent than any person, far more capable of prolonged struggle with its environment. In fact, the social organism is the most real because the most complete of all beings. The reality of the social organism never could have been doubted since such a science as political economy began. But the laws of its life and development have been long in coming to light. At last this is being done. Philosophy has traced the laws of society, whether of its organisation or of its progress. We now read the course of its life — at least that it has a

course, and has a life. There is no longer any doubt of a social organism and of its development.

S. But surely this is not new.

P. New? I thought it was now the commonplace of all the scientific thinkers about society. See what Mill, or Lewes, or Spencer say. You could not have the truth about the social organism better stated than in Spencer's little book on "Sociology"; and you will hardly call him a Comtist.

S. I thought the book excellent, but this social organism is a metaphor; is it not?

P. A metaphor? certainly not. By all the tests which biology can furnish, society forms an organism quite as distinctly as a man, and one far more complex. But of course scientific philosophy has to be read by the light of science, not of theology.

S. Well, I have no doubt, if I studied biology, that I should agree with Spencer as to the social organism. But does that make humanity a deity?

P. I did not say a deity.

S. Well, a person?

P. I did not say a person.

S. Well, a Being with a big B.

P. You are welcome to a little b if you like. But permit me to recall you to where we stand. You have before admitted that the whole course of civilisation exhibits to us a composite and intelligible power; that this power is the immediate, even if not the ultimate, source of all human improvement; that the blessings which we derive from this power exalt the imagination and kindle gratitude; and now you have admitted that this power is the life, the activity of a being, just as real as you or I, and far more permanent. I call that being Humanity.

S. To which I shall not bow down. I need as a deity something more abstract, more subtle, more —

P. More in the nebula of Orion?

S. But though I shall not bow down, I admit that supposing your statement as to the biological notion of organism to be correct — and if Spencer says so, I accept it — the collective energy of mankind may be that of a being; but it is a most materialist being, scarcely more spiritual or transcendental than man himself.

P. So, instead of finding humanity abstract, a pure creation of logic, a metaphysical fancy, and the like, your present objection is that it is not sufficiently abstract, not enough of an idea? You have rather shifted your ground since you told me that it was a helpless absurdity, a simulacrum, a mere word, a fiction, a monstrosity. You may be quite sure of this, the serious obstacle to the doctrine of Humanity will long be that it is too real, too human, too obvious. I have no doubt now that your true objection to Humanity is rather that it does not suggest the "Milky Way," has none of the Absolute about it, and the real *ὄντως ὄν*.

S. Yes; that is where it seems to me so material.

P. And therefore to me so real.

S. To be so purely human.

P. And therefore so sympathetic.

S. To be so mundane.

P. And hence omnipresent.

S. But your being has no consciousness of its own existence, no thought, no love.

P. How do you prove that? You who are a theosophist, and who fathom the consciousness of transcendent beings, and who know the thoughts of the philosophical Deity, what is the nature of His personality, His heart, His soul?

S. Hush! I do not dogmatise on such a subject.

P. Well, then, neither do we.

S. But do you ascribe human affections and thoughts to Humanity?

P. For us it is enough to know that the consensus of human care and bounty really provides for us. For even the most miserable would be yet more miserable if left alone on the planet, the last or only man, face to face with grim nature. And we see in this provision all the signs of concert and connection, as if it came from love and mind. Can any theist allege more? And we know that the whole is made up of infinite touches of individual goodness, toil, and forethought. No one of the countless myriads who have lived on earth could have lived a day of their early years without incessant love and care, lavished out of pure heart without return, and very often neither by father nor by mother. And we know that the humblest rag and coarsest basket in which the beggar child is laid were all produced by human hands working with fruitful activity, under some intelligent aim, and with some honest feeling at the bottom of it. In every intellectual act we see this chain of thought working sleeplessly and connectedly. It is enough that Humanity provides for us, as if in the spirit of a mother, and guides us as by the mind of a teacher. We spin no nets of metaphysics about the self-consciousness of Humanity, the auto-mind, and the auto-love.

S. But this is the very essence of all religion.

P. No, only of mere metaphysics. I grant you this. Humanity can never become a practical idea to those who remain in the absolute frame of mind. It rose out of the relative thought, and can satisfy only the relative intellect.

S. Ah! I see that this discussion of ours can hardly come to distinct result. I believe in the Absolute, and you in the relative; and you insist that I shall never see anything in Humanity until I come to the relative, which will be, I suppose, when I have studied biology, and the rest of the sciences,

that you call Cosmology. Thank you, no; I prefer the boundless realms of literature and pure speculation. But do you ever suppose that Humanity can be an object of reverence to men? Can you believe a change in human religion from Monotheism to Humanity? is it not altogether enormous?

P. Greater, do you think, than the change from Polytheism to Monotheism, from Venus and Bacchus to Christ, from Catholicism to Calvinism? The religious sentiment of man has undergone prodigious revolutions, but we ask from it no such effort. The sense of human fellowship, of duty to humanity and of our dependence upon it, is a real and growing fact. It is the real religion of human duty which unconsciously keeps up a high and noble purpose in civilisation. Millions acknowledge its power who know nothing of its organic reality or its scientific composition. Philosophy has to reveal Humanity, just as St. Paul had to reveal Christ. But it is already here in fact; it exists; it moves the world. It has not to conquer its ground from the traditional faiths. They are melting away of themselves, under all the theosophies and criticisms around us. The spirit of the age, as you so amply admit, is positive. It has breathed upon Theosophy, and that is melting away; it has breathed upon Humanity, and this is growing vivid and real through the haze.

S. But for all this it is an abstract, ideal thing; something we can only conceive in thought.

P. Does it lie with you to raise such an objection, or with any Theist or any Pantheist? That being of whose organic influence we believe we have plain evidence is to each of us a real being. Besides, just now you objected that it was grossly material. On which are you going to rest? We can show you in the flesh the living organs and parts of our supreme

power; we can show you its visible and palpable works; we can point to its energy throbbing in every thought or act or feeling of daily life; and you tell me that it exists only in idea. Will you point to any power in any religion of which you can show all these realities, or any power in any religion which is not abstract and ideal? Nay, leave such arguments to the pure materialist, to the fetishist rather, who says, I admit no existence that I cannot handle and touch.

S. But do you mean that mankind can feel reverence and devotion towards an abstract being?

P. I thought that was the essence of all theology. But it is true of much more than theology. If men can reverence an abstract hypothesis, much more can they reverence an abstract reality. Our country is an aggregate of vital energies which really form one life; but it can only be seen in imagination and by its effects. Has the devotion to one's country never been an overmastering religion of its own? Think of all the heroism which was called out by the religion of Rome, the real religion to the ideal and yet living city. Think of the devotion of the greater churchmen to the Church. Is not their Church a real and living thing, though cognisable only in thought? Has it not been the source of enormous efforts and the object of unquenchable devotion? Well, the Church, the city, the country, are but partial and very imperfect powers, inasmuch as they imply and suggest other powers, more or less important. They are to Humanity mere germs and images of the whole. It can absorb them all; for it presents itself in the entire sum of human interests, ever present, all-sufficing. And thus it will command a devotion a thousand times more pure, more rich, more abiding.

S. I do not dispute all this. Had I so understood your meaning of Humanity I do not know that I should have cared to oppose you. But *claudite jam rivos, pueri* — the meadows

of Magdalen have drunk philosophy enough. If you mean merely that the progress of our human civilisation is an object towards which men may come to feel a spirit of devotion, well, we are agreed. But one word more. The more real you make out Humanity to be, the more does it fall short of the mysterious infinitude of the Absolute.

P. To sensible men the question is not which is the more gigantic idea, but which is the most real. It might be the more fascinating thought that men could fly like birds or were not liable to death, but it would be a foolish thought to act upon. What we are all looking for, I suppose, is the grandest real conception which can govern human life. If an idea is not in practical relation to human life, it is no use to tell us that it is so very grand.

S. Ah, but you alter the very notion of religion, and make it mere social regulation.

P. Now, who put such a preposterous idea into your head?

S. Why, the Rector says so distinctly.

P. Do beg the Rector to "dip into" his Comte again the next time that he thinks of refuting him. You can hardly open the first chapter on religion without seeing that Comte speaks of it as being the regulation of individual consciences quite as much as the regulation of society. He defines religion just as other people do. In what now do you make religion to consist?

S. In the acknowledgment of a Power without us towards which our nature submits and to whom our energies are devoted.

P. Well, this is precisely the meaning that Comte gives to religion. And what is the result of such a sense of an External Power?

S. A harmony of the nature and the faculties — what devout people call finding peace.

P. Precisely : these are almost the words of Comte.

S. But this acknowledgment must be directed towards a deity, an omnipotent, benevolent Creator, and so forth.

P. Why, I thought you quoted the Rector just now about the speculative difficulties in the way of that idea. Besides, do you assert that Buddha and Confucius and their countless millions of followers had no religion? And it is certain that any Supreme Power conceived by them was not a deity.

S. Ah! but there is another view of religion in which we differ *toto cælo*.

P. Well, I cannot follow you up there — I can only argue terrestrially.

S. You make religion (you now tell me) a thing of individual consciences; but you also make it, you admit, a thing of social regulation. Now I say that religion is a purely individual thing — a private concern between me and my God, with which my neighbours have no business, and which will not interfere with my neighbours.

P. Ah! now indeed we come to an issue so radical that it is impossible for us to argue, one where we can only state our differences. I would have you observe but this; when I insist that religion implies the uniting of soul with soul by a common faith, of society in a common worship, believing a common doctrine, and regulated by a uniform discipline, I am in agreement with all the actual religions which have ever existed, Fetishist, Polytheist, or Monotheist, whilst you, in asserting that religion is a thing of each soul and its Maker alone, are in disagreement with everybody but some of the later mystics or spiritualists. Thought, morality, activity, civilisation in every form, all imply collective sympathies and common opinions; and is religion to be the one side of human life which is purely individual? If it be, then religion can have no bearing on morality, on action, on life

at all; because the moment it presumes to intervene in any practical issue, it is met with the answer: "Keep in your own domain; one man's religion is not another man's religion. Your opinions may suit your idiosyncrasy, but they do not suit mine. My Supreme Being whispers to my conscience to take care of number one." It is certain that on such an assumption religion must be divorced from morality. For morality simply means the common views that men hold as to what they ought to do. And if religion is not capable of being reduced to a common view, and does not dictate any common duty, morality and religion have no common ground. No! I will tell you the catastrophe to which I think you are going — mysticism, spiritualist maundering, and beyond, a gulf of lawless immorality — for when every man insists on having his own God within his heart he soon ends in being his own God.

S. Come, I have caught it at last. But I fear we shall never settle this issue. I hold that morality, thought, and activity will all take care of themselves. You seem to think they want the aid of religion?

P. Indeed I do; what do you look on as the province of religion?

S. As the Rector says, it is a thing peculiar to each particular soul, it is a matter wholly for the individual consciousness.

P. Well, then, each particular soul must settle religion for itself, and it is a thing about which neither you nor I, nor any one else, can profitably talk. I am conscious of an infinite happiness in this lovely May afternoon; but no words can express my consciousness; nor can I persuade you to have it, if you have not got it; nor can we ever be sure that your consciousness is at all like mine, or will lead you to do the same things. Tell me now, if your religion is a state of

consciousness so perfectly personal, why do you ever talk about your religion at all?

S. I never do.

P. You are right. I have been indiscreet to question you about it so long.

S. At least it has secured us a delightful stroll. But there is a great deal yet of which I have to arraign your faith. The Rector tells us that you are the bitterest foes to knowledge, and your sect would crush intellectual progress more effectually than the Jesuits or the Inquisition.

P. Oh! Guy Fawkes and Torquemada were enlightened men in comparison to us; and he tells you, possibly, that like the Jews in the Middle Ages, we feast on Christian babies! But forgive me, we should have to walk many more times round the meadows before we had settled that. And, to be frank with you, I feel that on this question your mind is not open to argument. You take up a position which renders you unable to judge if our system is hostile to progress or not.

S. How so?

P. Simply that you have persuaded yourself that religion is a matter wholly for the individual consciousness. And it follows from your principle that any systematic religion whatever having a social end (and I say that all real religions have had a social end) is a hindrance to progress. With an individualist theory of that extreme kind, you are not free to judge how far our system is retrograde. With you all "doctrines" are retrograde as such, *ex hypothesi*.

S. Yes, truth is consistent, yet truth is free; but as soon as truth is systematised, it is marred. All systems of philosophy are, and must be, as systems, false. The Rector says that flatly.

P. You seem to me as one who should say that grains

of corn are excellent things in themselves, but if made into a loaf, they turn to rank poison; or one who should say, that books ranged in a library are full of truth, but when read and mastered by a wise man they become nonsense.

S. Oh! it is not for you to talk about books, you who hate intellect like a Spanish priest.

P. And add, who devour babies. By the way, can you mention any one of the illustrious names in thought who is not to be found in Comte's Calendar of Great Men; or can you mention ten men in England who have mastered the encyclopædic training in all the sciences which Comte thought necessary for real education, one which he perhaps alone in this generation possessed.

S. Why, as the Rector says, Comte's polity is pure fiction, arbitrary fancy of his own, not positive science at all.

P. I should like to adjourn that question till you and he have honestly studied it. That can only be decided after due examination of each point. Besides, I am not quite sure that I shall accept even his *imprimatur* as to what is positive science. A man who holds that all systems of truth are necessarily false is not, I should say, a fair judge of any system.

S. But you want to tie down human knowledge to the point at which it stood when Comte died. You cry *la clôture* to truth and science; and tell us that everything since discovered is false and idle.

P. Oh! monstrous! you might as well say that Bacon's object was to chain up the human mind. This is a curious misconception surely, if you are serious. Comte's philosophy is an *organon*, a method, a theory for the arrangement of our knowledge, not an encyclopædia of facts, for the stereotyping of all our knowledge. He himself has traced out fields yet open to human discovery, which might occupy the human

mind for a thousand years to come. His system is simply a theory as to how our knowledge may be first connected within itself, and then connected with life.

S. But I object to all connecting knowledge together. I call that process making it false. And I object to all connecting knowledge with life. I call that process slavery. Intellect is ever individual, ever untrammelled, ever soaring free through boundless space. I am no utilitarian to make it useful to man. Human good is a mere drop in the ocean of Universal Good.

P. Now at last we have a plain issue before us. That same condition of the intellect I call its indolence, its waywardness, its impotence. I say the highest ideal of the intellect is to be social, systematic, practical, useful, sympathetic, and synthetic. Its duty is to organise and glorify human life into harmony and beauty; and not to soar idling about space like a truant seraph or a runaway Pegasus. It is far harder intellectual work for the intellect to discipline itself and man, than to ramble round the universe. The philosophy which consists in repeating that knowledge can never be organised is the philosophy of helplessness, of cynicism, of indolence, of despair. Well, farewell: this glorious day is closing. Go home and write a review of the religion of Humanity in your finest critical style, grandly free of any study of it. And see there, those groups of young undergraduates round the cloisters. Some of them may be made into useful men; some of them are careless, selfish, or dull; some of them have within their pliant souls very beasts of sensuality, very beasts of prey. They all need help, counsel, love, religion. Go to them and preach your Gospel to the boundless freedom of the mind, that religion is a matter wholly for the individual consciousness. You have my earnest wishes for your success. Farewell, let us part in peace.

V

PANTHEISM AND COSMIC EMOTION

1881

This Essay was suggested by a most interesting paper contributed by the late Professor W. K. Clifford and discussed at the Metaphysical Society. This reply appeared in the "Nineteenth Century" in August 1881.

OUTSIDE the borders of the orthodox theologies — indeed to some extent within them — three great ideas seem to hold men's thoughts: the modernised idea of a single and simple Godhead, the metaphysical idea of Divine Mystery in the Universe, the historical idea of human dignity and progress — Theism — Pantheism — Humanity.

Not to speak of the first or the last of these, we may examine on general grounds of religion and morality the claims of Pantheism to be an adequate basis of our lives, the final issue of the mighty Assize of religions, which this generation and the next are destined to try out.

The claims of Pantheism are not small. It is a vague term; its field is indefinite; its doctrines curiously elastic. It is the faith of idealists everywhere: of the poets, of the metaphysicians, of the enthusiasts. It has so many forms, and so few formulas, that it gathers round it sympathies everywhere; and seems to illustrate everything even when it explains nothing. A generation ago, it could be assigned only to a poet, or a philosopher here and there. Pantheism

would seem to have no hold on the public at all. But then, a generation ago, the fountains of the great deep of orthodoxy had only begun to break. It is otherwise now. Now, the problems of orthodoxy; of Theism; the very bases of Creation, Providence, and Judgment, are being debated in the market-places and the street; the great dilemma of Infinite goodness with Omnipotent power, making and ruling the world we know and see to-day, is exercising the thoughts of men, and women, even of children, and the answers are very various, and sometimes obscure. And thus, Pantheism, in the widest sense, is become the great halting-place between the devotion to God and the devotion to Humanity.

Not Pantheism in any precise form; not as a philosophical doctrine, not as a creed that can be stated, often not consciously held at all. We may include under the somewhat technical term Pantheism *all* those types of thought, and conscious or unconscious tendencies of thought, which have this common sign — that they find the ultimate and dominant idea in some Divine Mystery of the Universe, in the sense of Beauty and Power of Nature, in the immensity of the sum of Life and Matter, it may be in a pious trust in the general good of all things, be the things human and moral, or be they physical and unconscious.

Now Pantheism in this sense is a very widespread frame of thought. Many a subtle intelligence, shrinking from the logical difficulties of an Omnipotent Providence, seeks in the sum of all things that type of Beauty and universality which it can no longer gather from the Bible. Many a sympathetic heart that would feel pain in frankly rejecting the possibility of religious hopes, and yet finds the religious hope of Humanity too definite, earthly, and prosaic

for its ideal, falls back on some half-uttered vision of Beauty, Goodness, Mystery — a vision which admits nothing so formal as a Person, and nothing logical enough to make a proposition. Some of the best brains and hearts float in this dream; impatient of Theism, indifferent to Humanity; cherishing in their souls this transcendental possibility of a something beyond, that is neither some *one* nor any actual thing at all: merely a promise of Good, or Fair.

There are all kinds of degrees and modes in this tendency we call Pantheism, from the artist's thirst for nature, to the thinker's rest in the Unity of Law, and so on to the practical man's respect for external force, and the mystical theologian's habit of seeing God in everything and everything in God. These are, no doubt, very different types of mind; but they agree in this:— they all find not only a religious value to the human spirit in the mystery and majesty of the World without; but the Supreme Power and Truth. The physical beauty of a sunset touches some; the range of physical law touches others; these are the happy natures of constitutional optimism; those are the mystics to whom the definite is the vulgar and the logical is the misleading. All are alike in this, that they yearn to pass far beyond the range and realm of Man; and yet they will not face the Person of a living God.

We are all familiar with that fine temper — man's love for the unfathomable glories of the scene around him. How many a sensitive nature has gazed deeper and deeper into the firmament of stars, till the imagination seemed, like the watchman on the halls of Agamemnon at Mycenæ, to see new lights burst out; as if worlds were being born unto worlds in myriads. Then the exhausted spirit feels almost on the threshold of immensity; and half believes

that each instant the heavens are about to break open to their highest, and these human eyes are about to behold the reality of the Unseen. We have all known that moment; but the veil has never been parted, and we have lain down with aching eyes and a delicious void in our hearts: feeling that there is something, we know not what, in Space; but that *we* are as far off from it as ever. And the next morning we go to work — and the Universe fades away in the noontide light, and the clear voice of our children, and the emergencies of our daily anxieties, the care of our fortunes, or our public duties, move us with ten times the force and reality of the Milky Way.

I know no passage which better expresses the religious value of Nature than these words of Wordsworth:—

And I have felt
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy
 Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
 Of something far more deeply interfused,
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
 And the round ocean and the living air,
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
 A motion and a spirit, that impels
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
 And rolls through all things.

Therefore am I still
 A lover of the meadows and the woods,
 And mountains; and of all that we behold
 From this green earth; of all the mighty world
 Of eye and ear, — both what they half create,
 And what perceive; well pleased to recognise
 In nature and the language of the sense,
 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
 Of all my moral being.

This is poetry. Is it religion? It is exquisitely touch-

ing and inspiring to the spirit. Is it enough to guide lives, to curb passions, to give light to despair, unconquerable force to societies, nations, races? Can it do what the law of Moses did, or the law of Christ; because, if it cannot do this, it is not religion?

Certainly it is poetry, and more than poetry; it is fresh and vital truth, in the form of immortal art. No one of us would willingly let die a note of it, or lose a verse from that magnificent Psalter of Nature, which, from Homer to Walter Scott, is one of the best gifts that genius has bestowed on Man. Why need we lose it; why need we cease to cherish it and extend its power? I take that passion for Nature, that worship of Nature, in all its forms and range, that sympathy with all the inner teaching of Nature, that Cosmic Emotion which Wordsworth called in the rhapsody of joy, "the soul of my moral being"—and I ask—is that enough?

Poetry is one thing. Science, Action, Life, Religion, are far other—all much wider and more continuous. Poetry is but one mode of Art, and Art is but *one* side of *one* of the elements of Human Nature. Poets are not (for all that some people say) the guides of life; their business is to beautify life. And after all, this Worship of Nature, this poetry of Pantheism, is but one side even of Poetry, and not its grandest. No poets have surpassed in this field the greatest in the ancient and in the modern world: Homer the poet of the sea, Shakespeare the poet of the air, he who saw the floor of heaven thick inlaid with patines of bright gold. And yet in Homer as in Shakespeare the worship of Nature holds but a subordinate place. To these great brains the folds of many-fountained Ida, the waste of hoary brine, the moonlight sleeping on the bank, the morn walking over the dew of some high eastern hill

— these are but the frame wherein are set their pictures of men, and women, and societies; of passions, sufferings, character; of hope, despair, love, devotion.

Poetry, taken as a whole, presents us with an image of Man, not of Nature; the drama of real life, not a dream of the Universe. And if the starry night is beautiful, it may be nothing to the smile of a child. One speech of Prometheus, or of Hamlet, or Faust, teaches us more than ten thousand sunsets.

And this poetic idealisation of Nature is a choice of certain facts for the sake of their beauty and their majesty. It deliberately excludes myriads of other facts that are not beautiful, and yet are very real and act potently on us. Deep is our debt to the magicians who have shown us how to see the world radiant and harmonious. It is an ideal, infinitely precious and invigorating. But it is not the real truth, or rather not the whole truth,—far from it. The world is not all radiant and harmonious; it is often savage and chaotic. In thought we can see only the bright, but in hard fact we are brought face to face with the dark side. Waste, ruin, conflict, rot, are about us everywhere. If tornadoes, earthquakes, glacier epochs, are not very frequent, there is everywhere decay, dissolution, waste, every hour and in every pore of the vast Cosmos. See Nature at its richest on the slopes of some Andes or Himalayas where a first glance shows us one vision of delight and peace. We gaze more steadily, we see how animal and vegetable, and inorganic life are at war, tearing each the other: every leaf holds its destructive insect, every tree is a scene of torture, combat, death; everything preys on everything; animals, storms, suns, and snows waste the flower and the herb; climate tortures to death the living world, and the inanimate world is wasted by the ani-

mate, or by its own pent-up forces. We need as little think this earth all beauty as think it all horror. It is made up of loveliness and ghastliness; of harmony and chaos; of agony, joy, life, death. The nature-worshippers are blind and deaf to the waste and the shrieks which meet the seeker after truth.

And if beauty and harmony are ascendant in these spots of earth which we fill, are they in the South Pole and the North Pole and the depths of the Atlantic and Pacific; or in the extreme icy heavens and in the fiery whirlwinds of the Sun, and in those regions of Space where they tell us Suns explode and disappear, annihilating whole solar systems at once? The Moon of the poets is an image of peace and tenderness; but the Moon of science makes the imagination faint with the sense of a lifeless, motionless, voiceless, sightless solitude. What a mass is there in Nature that is appalling, almost maddening to man, if we coolly resolve to look at all the facts, as facts!

Nay, has this wandering speck of dust, that we call ours, one of the motes that people the sun systems, has it always been beautiful? Parts of it now are. But in the infinite ages of geologic time, even in the vast glacier epochs, in the drift and the like, or when this island lay drenched in a monotonous ooze — was beauty, or what man thinks beauty, the rule then? The flowers, the forests, the plantations, the meadows, the uplands waving with corn and poppies, are the work of man. The earth was a grisly wilderness till man appeared; and it had but patches of beauty here and there, until after man had conquered it. Man made the country as much as he made the town; the one out of organic, the other out of inorganic materials.

And what is beauty, and harmony, and majesty in Nature? Nothing but what Man sees in it and feels in it. It is beauti-

ful to us; it has a relation to our lives and our nature. Absolutely, it may be a wilderness or a chaos. The poets indeed are the true authors of the beauty and order of Nature; for they see it by the eye of genius. And they only see it. Coldly, literally examined, beauty and horror, order and disorder seem to wage an equal and eternal war. Morally, intellectually, truly, Man stands face to face with Nature — not her inferior, not her equal, but her superior, like the poet's last man confronting the Sun in death. The laws of Nature are the ideas whereby Man has arranged the phenomena offered to his senses; the beauty of Nature is the joy whereby he grasps the relations of his environment to his own being. When we think we worship Nature, we are really worshipping Homer and Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Shelley, Byron and Scott. As Comte said in a bold but not irreverent moment — the Heavens declare the glory of Galileo and Kepler and Newton; for the ceaseless spectacle of mysterious movement they present recalls to us the minds which first saw unity and law therein.

There is, as we say, another and a far deeper spirit of Pantheism, more subtle and more philosophical than any Nature worship, than this love of the beauty and life in the world. It has forms infinite, that cannot be numbered: the sense of immensity in the sum of things — not ourselves: the sense of stupendous Order around us, of convoluted Life around us, or of Force around us: or it may be a trust that things are tending towards good around us: or that intoxication with the fumes of Godhead reduced to vapour which marked the metaphysical Pantheism of Spinoza. There are some whose faith is sustained on even more ethereal food; who idealise the Universe as such, the Good, the Beautiful, the True.

What are all these, if we take them to be quite indepen-

dent of God, and yet outside of and sovereign over Man? I know what is meant by the Power and Goodness of an Almighty Creator; I know what is meant by the genius, and patience, and sympathy of Man. But what is the All, or the Good, or the True, or the Beautiful? What is the Anima Mundi, if it is neither God nor Man, neither animate nor inanimate, but both or neither? And what is the Eternal that makes for righteousness, if only Philistines can take it to be Providence? If God and Universe are identical expressions, we had better drop one or other. If the "Universal Mind" is nothing so grossly anthropomorphic as the old idea of God, but really is the cause of all things and is indeed all things, if being and not being are identical and the identity of being consists in its being the union of two contradictories, — let us, in the name of sense, get rid of these big vague words, and having got rid of God as a term of a narrow dogmatism, and Mind and Soul, as a verbal spiritualism, let us say simply Things, and have the courage of our opinions, and boldly profess as our creed "I believe in nothing except in Things in general."

For, what this metaphysical Pantheism gains in breadth and philosophic subtlety over the mere poet's worship of Nature, it loses in distinctness, even in meaning, till it becomes a phrase, with as little reality in it as the "Supreme" of the latest school of unutterables. The "All" is a very big thing, but why am I to fall down before it? The Good is very precious, but good for what, to whom? Cobras and mosquitoes are good at biting; volcanoes are good to look at from a safe distance; and bloody battlefields are good for the worms underground. The "All" is not good nor beautiful; it is full of horror and ruin. And Truth is simply any positive statement about the "All."

When people decline to be bound by the cords of a formal Theology, and proclaim their devotion to these facile abstractions, they are really escaping in a cloud of words from giving their trust to anything; for "Things in general as understood by myself" is a roundabout phrase for that good old rule, the simple plan viz.:— "what I like."

There lies this original blot on every form of philosophic Pantheism when tried as a basis of Religion, or as the root idea of our lives, that it jumbles up the moral, the immoral, the non-human and the anti-human world: the animated, and the inanimate; cruelty, filth, horror, waste, death; virtue and vice; suffering and victory; sympathy and insensibility. The dualism between moral being and material being is as old as the conscience of man. It is impossible to efface the antagonism between them; their disparate nature is a consequence of the laws of thought and the fibres of the brain and the heart. No force can amalgamate in one idea tornadoes, earthquakes, interstellar space, pestilences, brotherly love, unselfish energy, patience, hope, lust, and greed. No single conception at all can ever issue out of such a medley; and any idea that is wide enough to relate to the whole must be a mere film of an idea, and one as little in contact with the workings of the heart or the needs of society as the undulatory theory of Light or the Music of the Spheres.

Try any one of these sublimities in any of the crises of life in which men and women in old days used to turn for help to what *used* to be called Religion. A human heart is wrung with pain, despair, remorse; a parent watches the child of his old age sinking into vice and crime; a thinker, an inventor, a worker breaks down with toil, and unrequited hope, and sees the labour of a life ending in failure and penury; a widow is crushed by the loss of her husband

and the destitution of their children; the poor see their lives ground out of them by oppressors, without mercy, justice, or hope. Go then, with the Gospel of Pantheism, to the fatherless and the widow, and console them by talking of sunsets, or the universal order; tell the heart-broken about the permutations of energy; ask the rich tyrant to remember the sum of all things and to listen to the teaching of the *Anima Mundi*; explain to the debauchee, and the glutton, and the cheat, the Divine essence permeating all things and causing all things — including his particular vice, his passions, his tastes, his greed, and his lust. And when social passions rage their blackest, and the demon of anarchy is gnashing its fangs at the demon of despotic cruelty, step forward with the religion of sweetness and light and try if self-culture so exquisitely sung by Goethe and his followers will not heal the social delirium.

We know what a mockery this would be. It would be like offering roses to a famished tiger, or the playing a sonata to a man in a fever. To soften grief, to rouse despair, to curb passion, to purify manners, to allay strife, to form man and society, everything is vain but that which strikes on the heart and the brain of man, stirring the soul with a trumpet tone of command, sympathy, exhortation, and warning. Men on a battle-field may be reached by the ringing voice of their leader; but Madonnas by Raffaele or sonnets by Shakespeare are not likely to touch them; and a man aflame with greed or revenge is as deaf as a crocodile to the general fitness of things. In agony, struggle, rage of passion, and interest, the suffering look of a child, the sympathetic voice of a friend, the remonstrance of a teacher, the loving touch of a wife is stronger than the Force of the solar system, more beautiful and soothing than a sunset on the pinnacles of Apennines or Alps.

We all know how uncertain is the effect even of the most powerful human sympathy; but nothing has a chance of effect in the terrible crises but that which speaks to human feeling and is akin to the human heart. The Universal Good, the Beauty of Nature, Force, or Harmony are abstractions, ideas, possible in the more thoughtful natures, at the sweeter and calmer moments of life, but lifeless phrases to the mass in the fiercer hours of life, out of all relation with action, and effort, work, and the play of passion. A Power which is to comfort us, control us, unite us — and a Power that is to have any religious effect on us must comfort, control, unite — must be a power that we conceive as akin to our human souls, a moral power, not a physical power; a sympathetic, acting, living power, not a group of phenomena, or a law of matter. The Theisms in all their forms had this human quality; the gods of the Greeks and the Romans were the glorified beings residing in things; the God of Paul and Mahomet, Augustine and Calvin, was the living Maker of all things and ruler of all things. He was always a person, and a being more or less close to the human heart and the human will. And so every form of faith in which morality, or humanity, or the progress of mankind, or the spirit of civilisation, or anything human, moral, sympathetic, stands for the highest object and ideal of life — all of these speak to man as man in a like moral, social, or emotional atmosphere.

We know how imperfectly even these act, how little men and women are affected by the love of an all-perfect Creator, and the agony of atonement, by a mediating God, or by the Judgment Day, by the hopes of Heaven and the terrors of Hell, when once they have begun to doubt the authenticity of these promises and these warnings, or to find them out of place in the busy work of earth. Where

the wrath of God and the love of Christ, and the Passion and Fall and Redemption have ceased to control, and soothe, and unite, it is an affectation to pretend that the pleasure in the world's beauty, or the mystery of existence can take the vacant place. Here and there are found natures of a meditative cast, and of native refinement of spirit, in whom these ideals and subtleties supply real moral and mental food. But for the mass the result is impossible, and can only deepen the anarchy and stimulate the passion and the selfishness. These sublimities of the universe are in essence vague; and what is vague lends itself easily to what is vicious and self-seeking. The energies and passions of men are of force infinitely more massive and keen than are their tastes, their reveries, and their meditations. The deepest of the moral impressions is often not enough to anchor the soul tossed and buffeted in a storm of passion. The mere analogies of the intellect would prove as feeble as packthread.

Let us ask ourselves what the thing is that has to be done; who the people are that have to be changed; what is the change that has to be wrought before Religion can be said to be doing its work. Religion is not a thing for the halting-places and the resting hours of life, for a quiet Sunday afternoon, for the moments of contentment and gentle repose in thought. The strain of religion comes like that of the pilot in a gale, or the captain on the battle-field, of the heroic spirit in agony, doubt, temptation, loneliness. Where pain is, and cruelty is, and struggle is; where the flesh is tempted, and the brain reels with ambition; where human justice, and tenderness, and purity are outraged; where rich and poor hate and war; where nations trample on the weak; where classes rage after gain; where folly, and self-indulgence, and gross appetites for base things,

and base aims settle down on a people like an epidemic; where in crowded fetid alleys, want, and exhaustion, and disease stagger unpitied to their grave, and a heavy voice rises up, "How long, how long!" from women pale with stitching, and children weary of wheels and bobbins — and no man listens — there Religion has to be in the midst — or rather ought to be in the midst. And is Religion to come, if it come at all, chanting a hymn to the sunrise, or with a formula about the correlations of the universe?

The main, daily business of Religion is to improve daily life, not to answer certain intellectual puzzles; to raise the actual condition of the great toiling mass; to transform society by making its activity more healthy, and its aim nobler and purer. It has to deal with the sins of great cities and the wants of great classes, the monotony, the uncertainty, the cruelty, of the industrial system. The weak side of the official Christianity, after all, is not so much its alienation from science, its mystical creed, or its conventional formulas, as the palpable fact that nineteen hundred years have passed since the birth of Christ, and the Gospel has been preached by millions of priests, and yet, in spite of it, the practical order of society is so cruelly hard on such great proportions of men, that it is still so far a world for the strong, and the selfish, and the unscrupulous. How is the stir of pleasure we feel in a starry night, or recognition of the subtle homologies which connect Life and Matter — how is the faint sense of these intellectual luxuries to change the fierce, hurried, confused battle of life and labour? And if it cannot act here, it will never be religion.

What, in a word, do we really mean by Religion? It is not enough to say that it is the answer to the questions, "What is the relation of man to the infinite?" or "What

is the origin of the universe?" or "What is the ultimate law, or fact, or power in the universe?" Religion, no doubt, must have something real and definite to say on each and all of these problems. But it means something far bigger, more complex, and practical than this. Religion cannot possibly be sublimated into an answer to any cosmical or logical problem whatever. Suppose it proved that the origin of the universe was found in evolution or differentiation, that gravitation or atomic force was the ultimate law of the universe, protoplasm being the first term of the series, and frozen immutability — the "cold obstruction" of the poet — the last term in the myriad links of the chain we call Life; suppose that the relation of man to the Infinite is the relation of the I to the Not-I, of the subject to the object, or again that it is the relation of a blood-corpuscle, or a cell, to a living animal, or any answer of the kind. Suppose any of these. Well! it is plain that neither evolution, nor differentiation, nor gravitation could be *ipso facto* any man's religion. It would be as absurd as to tell us that spectrum analysis was religion, or the persistence of energy, the binomial theorem, or the nebular hypothesis.

Now all these grand generalisations which pass by the general description of Pantheism are at most ultimate ideas of this kind, *plus* the impression of mystery and power with which we contemplate them — cosmic emotion, in fact. But then how are we to pass from these remote ultimate generalisations, even when lighted up by the glow of admiration and delight, sentiment and poetry — how are these to pass to daily life, to suffering, to sin, to duty?

If the beginning and groundwork of Religion is to answer this question, "What is this world around to *me*, what am I, this conscious speck, to the world around?" — if this

is the groundwork of all Religion, it is but the groundwork. The substance and crown of Religion is to answer the question, "What is my duty in the world, my duty to my fellow-beings, my duty to the world and all that is in it or of it?" Duty, moral purpose, moral improvement, is the last word and deepest word of Religion. And what is duty but my relation to men, my work towards men for men, my social life; and what is moral purpose, or moral improvement, but social purpose and social improvement? Duty, moral purpose, moral improvement, mean by their very etymology, the relations of man to man, not mere intellectual sympathies, but practical doings and mutual labour. Duty, morality, moral progress, imply a society, masses and groups of men; we cannot attribute them to solitary or transcendental beings. What would be duty, morality, progress, to Robinson Crusoe without his household and his companion, or to an Almighty and perfect God? We cannot use the words of them. Religion is summed up in Duty, and duty implies fellow-men — and much more — sympathetic work with men and for men.

Here is the failure of all the attempts of all the Pantheisms and idealisms of the universe. They cannot compass *duty*. No man can pass from these theories of differentiation, or world-spirit, or correlations of force, to duty, to social work in the mighty battle of life. You might as well tell a mother to bring up her child on the binomial theorem. Neither electricity nor the Milky Way can make men sob with remorse, or make women smile in grief. There is no common term between the immensities and tenderness, generosity, patience, sympathy. Call to the Unknowable and ask it to bestow on you a spirit of resignation to the dispensations of infinite differentiation.

The old theologies did (or do) in a way bridge the enor-

mous chasm between the Infinite and a good deed; for they told us that the good deed was the express order of the Almighty Creator who made the Infinite, and kept it in its place. There was (or is) a certain connection between God and duty, though it was often put to us in a very grim and distorted form of duty, in horribly inhuman, in fantastically unreal modes of duty. Still there was a connection. But between the molecular theory, or the development theory, and duty, there is no practical connection; and none but a casual one or a fancy one can be made. The molecular theory (or the like) applied to human life may land you in a doctrine of hardened selfishness; the development theory may land you in a practice of self-indulgence or lawless lust. God may inspire duty; Humanity may inspire duty. But cosmic emotion can at best appeal to the imagination, never to the heart or the conscience. To ask of it your duty to your neighbour is as idle as to try if by means of a steam-hammer you could beat out a sunset into an act of mercy.

We may use the arguments of theologians without arguing on the side of theology. If there be a real defensive energy in the older orthodoxies as against so much that is vague and unstable in modern scepticism, it is not at all wonderful. The faith of Christ, and Paul, and Augustine, and Luther would not have done all that it has done for eighteen hundred years if it did not touch the deepest chords of the human heart. Religion, in a simply human form, will have more sympathy with Theism than with Atheism; more respect for the Athanasian creed itself than for Pantheism; and a firm conviction that Christianity, whatever its destiny may be, will long outlive as religion all forms of cosmic emotion.

Has, then, the wonder and the beauty died out of Heaven

like the setting of a sun that shall rise no more? The things that we have seen, can we now see no more? Hath there passed away a glory from the earth? Not so! The worship of nature, the love and wonder at the world, our sense of all the universal harmonies — cosmic emotion so to call it — is neither crushed, nor dead, nor dying. It is as rich and radiant a part of our soul's food as ever in the days of Homer, or Hesiod, or Omar Khayyam, or Correggio, or Goethe, or Shelley. Cosmic emotion is not only a very real part of our culture, but it is an imperishable element in religion. Only it is not religion, it is only a small part of it, or rather only the foundation and prelude of religion.

A rational philosophy must include an adequate account of this external world, and its relations to man and the homologies of the physical world without and the spiritual world within. And as rational religion must stand on, or rather must incorporate and be (in part) rational philosophy, rational religion must recognise and contain this cosmic emotion. One common error, as it vitiated all the old theologies, so it now vitiates all the modern forms of materialism, pantheism, and even transcendentalism, whether in its metaphysical form or in its scientific form. No single explanation will cover the whole of the physical phenomena and the whole of the moral and intellectual phenomena, for the excellent reason that there is no single principle running through all, and no logical means of bringing them into one category of thought. Monism cannot cover the field of thought and action, whether it be the monism of evolution or force, or the monism of God or Spirit. The Cosmos in its immensity cannot be stated in terms of God, nor in terms of spirit, soul, or consciousness. Humanity and morality, on the other hand, cannot

be reduced to terms of physics, either of force, or of evolution, or of order. There always stand everywhere, and in the last analysis — matter and mind: we cannot conceive the absence of either; we cannot identify them; we cannot state one in terms of the other. Hence the eternal dualism of all real philosophy, and thereby of all true religion; the eternal Cosmos, as the field and envelope of the moral life, and that moral life itself — the Environment and the Life: Man and the Universe; or better, Humanity and the World.

Our love of this rich and potent earth, our awe at this mysterious system which peoples space with a marshalled host of worlds, our sense of the profound unities and harmonies of the mighty whole, are now transfused with all the insight of the poets from Job, and David, and Sappho, and Theocritus, to Shakespeare, and Shelley, and Wordsworth, and Blake, and Turner, together with all the thoughts of the philosophers from Pythagoras and Plato to Hegel and Comte; to Helmholtz and Darwin. Our sense of nature never was so rich and deep as it is now; and it gains in richness and depth immensely, when we are not asked to worship it, or to cast man's history and man's conscience and duty into its language (in short to make it a religion) or, on the other hand, to see in it the mere mode of life of an absolute, perfect, and almighty will.

Rational religion stands with a firm front between these two extremes, refusing to believe on the one hand that Nature in its good and its evil, its beauty and horror alike, is God, or the expression of God, or the visible manifestation of God and His will; — refusing to believe on the other hand that Nature is the measure of man, or any kind of divinity to man, or the highest term of a series of which man is the unit. It is not so! There lies in the heart of

the poorest and meanest child a force that cannot be even stated in terms of the deepest philosophy of the physical universe. Whilst one mother struggling to save one child were left on this mere fleck of dust in the countless procession of the suns, the devotion of that poor creature to her offspring, the love and trust of the child for her protecting parent, have a deeper religious meaning than all the music of the spheres, or the mystery of the cosmic forces. There, where these two are cowering together in trust, and love, there are still *life for others*, labour for others, endurance for the sake of something not our own, a sense of reverence and gratitude for protection, conquering pain and leaping over death.

And if we are to seek the sources of religion, the ideal of religion, in the rushing firmament of suns, or in the withering waifs and strays of humanity who are yielding up their last breath in mutual trust and love, we shall have to look for it in them, for we can find it only in humanity, and in the world around us as the sphere and instrument of humanity.

VI

THE CREED OF A LAYMAN

1881

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ONE of the hardest of the many hard sayings of Auguste Comte is this: *Man becomes more and more religious*. People look back to history, to the times of the early Christians, or the mediæval saints, to the Bible heroes or the authors of the Evangelical revival, and they deny the truth of this. In the growing abandonment of all theological belief by so many persons here, and by so many more in Europe, in the emptying of the chapels and the churches, in the visible advance all along the line of Atheism, Agnosticism, Materialism, and Secularism, it certainly does seem that Man is growing less and less religious, at least in one meaning of that term.

Far more than this. The schools of thought which are most in the ascendant are continually reducing the sphere of Religion to a minimum, and many of them systematically discard it — seek to free human life from religion altogether. Many teachers, either openly or silently, consciously or unconsciously, would substitute for religion, Science, Free Thought, Common Sense, the Infinite, or the Unknowable.

Notwithstanding all this, Positivism — which is popularly supposed to be Materialism, Secularism, or Atheism; which is most certainly *Positive*, i.e. scientific, which accepts no Revelation, no imaginary beings or worlds, trusting to the

real, to this world and this life; which has nothing to say about the Creation or direction of the universe, or about a Celestial existence after death — this Positivism still continues to repeat with perfect firmness and confidence, “Yes! *Man does become more and more religious.*”

It is plain that we are using religion in some different sense, not in the sense in which it is popularly used to-day, when it is taken to imply Divine beings and extra-tellurian life. We are using it in the true and real sense, in the old meaning; that meaning which, in the shrinking process, in the retreat along its whole line, Theology has abandoned. Still, we say, that this is the true and original meaning of Religion — that which Religion all along in theory has ever claimed to be: and when it is candid, feels that it ought to be.

That meaning of Religion is this. It is a scheme of thought and life whereby the whole nature of individual men and societies of men are concentrated in common and reciprocal activity, with reference to a Superior Power which men and societies alike may serve. In popular use the latter phrase alone in the definition has survived; and that in a particular aspect of it. When the various qualities of a man, and of masses of men, can be brought to work together to a great common object of Devotion — then you have Religion.

The essence of the idea is, that the faculties can all be brought by it into harmony and proper relation; that it binds up great multitudes in one feeling and one thought.

But to put aside for a moment any discussion about terms, to take this idea, this harmony of the whole nature and welding together of society, to use a phrase which was invented by a great master of expression, this “consolidation of co-operation” (religion is really that and nothing else), it is manifest that this harmony indeed increases from age to age.

In the old pre-historic ages there was no harmony within

man, when he was the wild untutored (it may be the noble) savage. There could be no true unity of classes under Caste, of Brahminism, under Slavery, in the ages of systematic conquest, in the moral anarchy and intellectual inequality of the Greco-Roman world. Is there harmony and unity under Islamism, was there in the Feudal class system, or in the arbitrary, mystical, spasmodic era of Catholicism? Could there be any real harmony in Protestantism and Dissent, which mean divergence, dispute, conflict? Could there be unity anywhere until Science had asserted its independence of blind faith, until Industry had gained the victory over War, until the people had won their full and equal place in modern society?

Now Classes are being swallowed up in the Republic; races and nations are being brought together; industry, science, humanity, are slowly asserting their superiority. The solidarity of Peoples, the Federation of mankind, or what is foreshadowed by such terms, is an idea which grows. The "consolidation of co-operation" is at hand. Unity of classes and races, harmony in the realm of thought and feeling are only now becoming practicable hopes. It is hardly in modern life, only indeed in the Future, that we can see as a vision, the true unity of the race, the harmonious concentration of Thought and Life.

If we mean by Religion that which makes man more complete, which makes societies united, it is plain that we are more and more converging towards this state.

Those who say, "Leave this convergence to itself, it is not a thing to strive for; the destiny of man is one of infinite differentiation without any corresponding process of co-ordination" — such men are talking against all the facts, the experience, and instincts of human nature.

Civilisation implies increasing co-ordination, consensus,

and sympathy of the vast human organism; though it be indeed a subtler co-ordination, a more rational consensus, a more equable sympathy.

We need not argue with those who can contemplate with patience, can actually promote, the state of discord, cross-purpose and confusion in the spirit of man; the disruption and antagonism between societies of men.

This can mean nothing but waste of our human faculties, struggle, and antipathy, not "peace and good-will amongst men." It is needless to argue such a theme — for every system of belief, philosophy, all schemes of society, morality, social progress, theories of civilisation, and plans of reform — all imply *some* discipline of our social nature — *some* bond to unite society.

So far we are pretty much agreed, at least all rational and serious persons are — that human nature must be got to work with the minimum of waste — and society with the minimum of friction, the maximum of correlation. But then the non-theological schools of the day are for the most part content to trust for this: either to some purely intellectual doctrine or doctrines: some say Science, some Truth, some say the principle of Evolution, or logical examination; some vaguely say Free Thoughts, the Spirit of Inquiry, the right of Private Judgment, some mystical gift for always being right of which we have never learned the secret.

Or, if they give up this, they practically trust to chance, and say human nature will work it all right in the end.

No doubt it will: but we must give human nature its fair chance, and accept what it demands; and if human nature calls out for Religion, religion it must have or die.

Trusting to luck, or chance, or the ultimate triumph of what is called Truth, almost all the non-theological schools, disciples of Science, of Free Thought, of Democracy, of

Secularism, and the like, repudiate anything like an organised attempt to reduce life as a whole to harmony by a central principle of life; they reject systematic discipline of life; they start back from Worship, from any formal appeal to the Feelings, from the very idea of Devotion of spirit to a great Power — in a word they turn with disgust or mockery from Religion.

Not indeed that they have ever proved this to be the sum of Philosophy, or the true teaching of History. Far from it, they assume it; they affect to know it by the Light of Nature as an intuitive truth. Mention to them *worship, devotion, religion*, the discipline of heart and practice in the continuous service of the object of devotion — in a word utter the word Religion — and they smile in a superior and satisfied way.

All the teaching of History, the entire logic of Philosophy, the perennial yearnings of the human heart, the intensest hopes of the best men and the best women, all these are against them. Philosophy means just putting one's thoughts into relation with each other, and with the facts and circumstances of human nature. Wherever in the story of mankind a grand epoch or movement is seen, there we have passionate devotion working with an over-powering belief at the bottom of it. Charlemagne and Alfred, Cromwell and Washington, St. Louis and Hildebrand, St. Paul, Mahomet, Confucius, Moses, were men whose whole natures were fused through and through — brain, heart, and will, all together by that which was at once to them Thought — Resolve — Love. They moved men and created epochs — not because they had got hold of some particular truth, or not merely by that, but because their mighty natures had been kindled with a high passion — because their lives were seen to be transfigured in its light.

Wherever around us to-day we see a beautiful character

and a noble life, there we see something more than a set of opinions and implicit reliance on the principle of free inquiry. What is it that we do see? We always find a passionate resolve to make life answer in fact to some end that is deeply believed to be right. We have the three things — belief — enthusiasm — practice.

Why, if we really wish something to act on the lives of men, why are we to surrender any one of these agents — belief, enthusiasm, practice? We want them all. All are not enough. To neglect any one is to leave human life one-sided, maimed, and incomplete. We can all see how empty is enthusiasm without knowledge and intelligence; how dry and formal is practice without enthusiasm. How is it that we fail to see how poor a thing is knowledge without enthusiasm and without practice?

The Revolt against the old faiths has been carried out blindly — too violently. Those who would sweep away Religion merely mean to sweep away the theological phase of religion. Those who repudiate Worship are simply dissatisfied with the old objects of Worship. To rebel against the ecclesiastical discipline of life is not to prove that life should have no discipline. To cease to venerate an unthinkable Creator and an unspeakable Mystery is not to cease to be capable of veneration towards anything. If our hearts feel void within us when we are bid to serve God, does this mean that our hearts are doomed to a void for ever? If our Faith in things supernatural is slipping from under us, does this mean that we must live for ever in this world of to-day without any Faith, with no Hope, no sense of Devotion to anything anywhere?

It is the delirium of revolt which screams out to us to cast out the faculty and the habit of faith along with the object or the form of our old faith. Besides it is cant: mere delusion

to suppose it is done, or can be done. Neither enthusiasm, nor discipline, nor faith, nor reverence, nor devotion to a cause, nor love for a Power greater than ourselves, are at all dying out in the world. They are not growing weaker. They are even in the midst of change, growing wider, deeper, more universal.

The political and social movements of our age show us as noble examples of unselfish devotion to a cause as any in history. The martyrs of science, of industry, of civilisation and progress, are of that same old stuff whose blood has of yore watered churches. Patriotism is a living passion. Our humanity deepens and widens, our sympathy grows tenderer, our earnestness to keep fresh the memory of the great dead grows more into a habit. Our civilisation is more conscious of its high destiny and its accumulating Duty.

The Schools that are the most eager to uproot all religion are themselves conspicuous for enthusiasm, devotion, self-sacrifice. No men have come nearer to the spirit of religious martyrs in our modern times than some of those devotees of the socialist, communist, democratic Gospel. The very Anarchists have shown us wonderful examples of discipline and faith. The Atheists, the Secularists, the Materialists stand almost first beyond the believers in creeds in constancy, fervour, and what a Christian would call an earnestness to save souls; and in nothing are they more conspicuous than in devoted reverence and submission to the heroes and teachers of their choice.

There is as much capacity for reverence in the world as ever — as much and more — scattered and incongruous as the objects of reverence have become. There is as much zeal, and force of heart, as much power of devotion as ever, as much capacity for association as ever. No moralist, no politician, no reformer for an instant doubts the power

of ideas, the value of discipline, the temper of devotion, and none of them certainly propose to forego the appeal to these. Man does become more and more religious in the range and universality of the religious instinct.

All this capacity for religious unity is checked in the present day by the prevailing theories. What has happened is that knowledge and belief do not range with devotion; practice is out of joint with profession; and reverence itself bears the standard in Revolt.

Positivism is a scheme for bringing all these three — belief, discipline, worship — again (or rather for the first time) really into line, and training this consolidated force to bear on Life and on Society. It says: "Man has a mind, and an enormous accumulation of knowledge. We have to satisfy that mind, and give order to that knowledge. Man has energies; we must give them a full scope, and yet keep them in due bounds. Man has a soul fitted for great devotion; we must fill that soul with a worthy object of devotion, strengthen it, purify it by constant exercise. If we leave out one of these sides, human nature is cramped, harmony is destroyed. And what is more, not only must all three sides be appealed to alike, but they must be appealed to by some great principle that can inspire them in one work."

If this *can be* done, it is plain how enormous must be its power over life. If there be such a principle, all else in human nature is of little moment till we have it. If harmony in the whole nature *be* possible, it must be the supreme good dreamed of by the philosophers of old. It must be happiness, duty, wisdom, peace, and life all in one.

And why, because we live in the midst of revolt against superstition and formalism, why are we to assume so confidently that there is no such harmony, that human nature shall drag on in the oscillations of eternal conflict, in mis-

understanding and crossed purpose, for ever till this planet chills into its last phase of silent ice? Why take for granted this tremendous and terrible fate? Why do we not turn to any shadow of divinity that is left us? Why do we not cling to God, Church, Book, and call upon Jehovah, Jove, or Lord, or (if men prefer it) call upon science, philosophy, progress, and all the spirits of our age to tell us if such a thing be, or be not? Strange that we do not all, day and night, incessantly seek for the answer to this, of all questions the most vital: "Is there anything by which man can order his life as a whole? Is there anything by which our nature may gain its unity, our race may acknowledge its brotherhood?" Why do we not make up our mind, or try to make it up? Why do we not resolve in which camp we will stand? How long shall we halt between two opinions?

It is mockery to talk about science, enlightenment, progress, free thought, to the myriads of men and women, and to tell them that these ought to serve them. What can they want more — why ask for religion? The rude men who sweat and swelter in mines, in furnaces and factories, the hedger and the ditcher, and the cottager with his pinched home, the women who stitch and serve, the children wandering forlorn and unkempt into rough life, how are these to be sustained and comforted by science and enlightenment? How will *free thought* teach discipline to the young, and self-restraint to the wild? What sustenance will the imaginative and the devotional nature receive from the principle of free inquiry? Human nature is not a thing so docile and intellectual that it can be tamed by fine thoughts; nor is society amenable to pure ideas. It is playing with the question to offer us anything less than a systematic philosophy, a grand and over-mastering object of reverence a resolute scheme of social and personal practice.

The religion of Humanity does offer these. What else is there that does? We speak, of course, to those who have deliberately, on one ground or other, put aside Church and Book, ritual and creed. We would disturb the faith of none who are satisfied in these. Here are the two questions?

I. Can we expect to see the real regeneration of human life (we speak to none who do not desire this) if we deliberately forego that which has been at the bottom of every regeneration of life — an appeal to the undying instinct of reverence, devotion, in the human heart?

II. Where can we place that devotion, so that it be an integral part of modern *science* and modern *society*, unless it be in the ever-present image of that Humanity, of which we are children and servants?

The problem is this — Human life and society are in want of a revivifying and reforming force.

The force of a great devotion has been the most potent of all reforming powers.

It must be a devotion that wholly satisfies and coincides with scientific, logical intellect; and, therefore, must be not superhuman.

It must be one that wholly satisfies and appeals to our practical energy, our craving for work and life on earth; and therefore, it must be not supra-telluric.

Now the old creeds, Bible and Salvation, no longer even seem to satisfy these latter conditions.

I will not say that these have been thrust aside by science and industry. Rather they have themselves slipped out of the way, fled from science and industry — got themselves out of sight and out of mind, retreated to some cloud-capt and inaccessible mountains, far away from life, never to return.

The old law of Bible and Salvation having abdicated,

resigned (in the earthly field of Thought and Work, in the real and the practical world), what remains?

Free inquiry, interminable free inquiry, scepticism, indifference, research and then more research, waiting for something to turn up, whilst, all the while, vice, ignorance, strife, moral helplessness and mental indecision do not wait, but grow and enlarge. Or else (and this is the alternative) the devotion of brain, and heart, and energy to the service of that Mighty Power which stands beside us day and night, of which every act and thought of ours is but the reflection, the aggregate force of the lives of true men in the past, the present, and the future, in which civilisation is incarnate and lives a continuous and visible life.

What else is there but this, if the sons of this age of light and labour are to have devotion at all?

There is much talk now about what some ingenious person has named "Fervent Atheism," and it is declared that fervent Atheism is a contradiction in terms. I am inclined to agree with this in a literal sense. The idea of basing a really devotional frame of mind, or any working enthusiasm of a genuine kind, on any negation is truly ludicrous. But to pass from Atheism or the assertion that there is no God — to pure Agnosticism (that you know nothing about God or any other object of worship), or to Evolution or the laws of matter, or infinite differentiation, or the Unknowable, or the Univer-sum, as Strauss calls it, or the Infinite as some metaphysicians say, or the All, or the Good, or any other ideal of the inanimate world; how utterly hollow is the notion that any real enthusiasm can be based on this! We need something that we conceive able to reach our human sympathies, to be of nature akin to our own, something that we can really commune with in a moral union — something living not dead — organic not inert. That is the hollowness of Pantheism in every form.

Look at things which *have* touched sympathies. The Church, the Chosen People, the Roman race, the city of Athens, of Sparta, Christendom, Islam, the Bible, the Republic, the Socialist Utopia, all of these *have* been the basis of true creeds, real enthusiasm, practical working religions. They have spoken to men face to face. And now when they or many of them are passing away; when Bible, Christendom, Islam, the Church, are all fading into the pages of history as the creed of Abraham and Isaac, and the divinity of Rome, of Athens and Sparta, have faded; now when we see how narrow, partial, inadequate, is each of these, how wanting in breadth and continuity even is the ideal Republic, even our own contemporary human race — what is there left, I say, what other idea can become the basis of a mundane faith but the idea of *Humanity*, which includes all? The collective destiny of men in the past, the present, and the future, is the real whole of which all these smaller ideas are but the broken reflections, or germs, is broadly human in its spirit, and touches the profoundest chord of sympathy. It is a power towards which we can feel the sense of brotherhood, and sonhood, and loyal sense of service.

What else is there to love and serve — if we seek to love and serve the greatest loveable and serveable thing on this earth, and we have ceased to love and to serve a supra-mundane Being?

Let who will and can love God and Christ, looking for a celestial crown; let them serve these. But let no one pretend to love or to serve the Infinite, or Evolution, or the idea of Good. It is a farce.

This I take to be the one indispensable, imperishable, truth of Positivism — the one central point round which everything else may be left to group itself. It holds up to us a Power: human, real, demonstrable, loveable — one that we can

feel with, and work for, and learn to understand, who provides for us, and whose good we can promote. It shows us something we can love and be proud to serve, something that can stir all our intellectual efforts, reduce them to system, something too that can dignify and justify our best exertions. And this something is the same for our whole nature, and it knits together our whole nature in harmony. It is always *here*, on earth.

The theological believers say "Have faith and all things shall be added unto you!" So we may say, believe in Humanity (no! it is impossible to disbelieve in Humanity) — but habitually come to look at Humanity as the converging point of your whole existence, thoughts, feelings, and labour; and all other things may be considered hereafter. It may be that they may be modified, enlarged, reformed. We are not about to claim for the vast intellectual and social programme of A. Comte any sort of infallibility, or any approach to finality. It will have of course, like all things, to develop with the growth of thought; it may be in parts revised in the progress of knowledge. Conclusions as to historical facts, judgments of men and of ages, scientific theories, logical dogmas, institutions of society, principles of government, details or ideals of social reform, Church, Priesthood, sacraments, and formulas may all, for aught we know, put on new forms or gain new meanings as future ages may require them. That is no affair of ours, and is not a practical matter.

But the one thing that in Positivism represents the Saving Faith is this:— That in the sense of devotion to the vast Human whole, of which each of us is an infinitesimal member, there lies the harmonising Principle that can give unity and force to our mundane nature.

Too much has been made of the deductions and corollaries of the human faith by those who have assailed it, and perhaps to some extent by those who have maintained it. The details,

the utopias, the suggestions and illustrations of Comte have been criticised with ridiculous minuteness, and with exaggerated importance. No one of these critics has ventured to dispute the great central Principle of a *human* synthesis for thought and life, the principle that in convergence towards our common Humanity we may at last find complete repose for our efforts — peace within us, peace amongst men.

None of them have ever shaken that great conception — which if it had stood alone would have made Positivism the greatest achievement of modern thought. The critics more or less distinctly or consciously adopt the principle. In fact Mr. Mill, M. Littré, and Mr. Lewes have most emphatically expressed their general adhesion to it. I hardly know what other universal principles there are (outside of theology) unless it may be Evolution and Nirvana.

Let us hold on to this idea, and all other things — doctrines, institutions, practices — will be made clear, or will be hereafter built up on their true foundations.

Now, if there be such a central point of Thought and Life, it follows as a certain deduction that the first of all our duties is to obtain for ourselves, and procure for others, a sound, complete, real education, an education not merely scientific, but moral and emotional, and not merely moral, but formed by practice into habit.

Deeper than all social reforms, before all political institutions, before all forms of government, more vital than any burning question whatever — lies the great want of a true education — an education to make this unity a reality.

The systematic concentration of our human faculties of brain, sympathy, activity, will not come about by itself or be maintained by itself, by talking about Man or by ejaculating Humanity. It will need a constant systematic education: training of mind, of heart, or habit.

But if there is to be a systematic education there must be trained and organised educators.

It would be a delusion, indeed it would be frivolous, to imagine that a really comprehensive and positive Synthesis (a scheme for a oneness of life based on facts) can be maintained by itself without continual, disciplined, organised efforts to sustain it.

A systematic education implies organised teaching; and as the education would be a dry, logical, ineffective thing, if it were limited to intellectual truth alone, so the organised teaching must extend to the moral and emotional nature; must advise, assist, modify the active, practical, and industrial nature as well.

If a systematic education mean more than the imparting of knowledge — and so it surely does — organised teaching must mean more than the lessons of academical professors.

It must mean some appeal to our deepest feelings, some forming of the character, some influence over action and habit.

This then is at bottom what Auguste Comte meant when he spoke of Church and a Priesthood. He used words which have come to be connected with Theology and with arbitrary authority, whilst of course he meant nothing of the kind. But he used words which imply a moral and a religious community, and moral and religious training — simply because he did mean a moral and a religious community, and he did mean a moral and religious training.

The meanings, other than this, which by association have gathered round these words, differ essentially from anything that is dreamed of by Positivism.

If Positivism have real religion, that Religion is uniformly natural, not supernatural; human, not theological; scientific, not imaginary.

“Religion which was first spontaneous, then inspired, lastly revealed, has now become demonstrated and demonstrable” (A. Comte).

If Positivism have any Priesthood, those priests, so called, will be simply the educators in science: philosophers, physicians, artists, moralists, practical teachers of real and practical things; without wealth; with no State establishment; with no political authority, with no legal monopoly, with no privileges or endowments, no antisocial tradition, no spiritual prestige — with no inspired books, no mystical Church; with no Heaven to promise, no Hell to threaten — with nothing but their knowledge, their usefulness, their high character, their sweetness of nature, to give them any influence whatever.

Why need any man fear such a Church and such a Priesthood — rather let me say such an education, such trained teachers?

It may be that the world is not ripe for the bare idea of an organised teaching, cannot tolerate the experiment of a systematic education at all. But if this be so, the world must as yet bid farewell to the hope that man will ever arrive at a permanent Synthesis at all — at any common centre of action for all sides of our nature and all parts of society.

Some provisional Synthesis men must have, whether they choose to call it Religion, Philosophy, or Truth. Some organised agency to keep that synthesis together they must have; call it Church, Education, Priesthood, Leaders of Thought, or Spirit of the Age.

If the ways and thoughts of modern civilisation reject everything that is not scientific, real, and organic, then the only Synthesis or Central Principle of Life that is left us, is the Devotion of our lives to Humanity. This is the one centre which is perfectly real and intelligible, wholly practical, entirely human, and yet most utterly sympathetic.

Thus only can Feeling be raised to its true place, that of inspiring our whole being.

Thus only will the Intellect be seriously stirred to work with Feeling, and to devote itself to enlighten, guide, and do the work of Feeling.

Thus only will Energy find a truly moral and sympathetic object of work — politics being controlled by morals — politics here meaning Industry as much as Government, so that man's practical activity as a whole may be moralised.

“Life in all its Thoughts as in all its Actions is brought under the inspiring charm of Social Affection” (A. Comte).

An answer that I often hear is this — “Very true, it is a beautiful ideal; but we do not want social affection: we fail to see the charm.” What can be the reply to this? I know but of one reply. “Your life will be *wasted*, will finally be miserable; the society around you will share your doubts, will go on becoming more discordant till you all do feel it. If you cannot feel the charm of social affection, you will feel the horror of social discord, of utter lawlessness and self-will.”

What has Theology, or any religion, to say to the man who deliberately declares that he prefers vice, self — his lower nature? If the priest says — Hell, the man of vice laughs: and the priest is now ashamed of saying — Hell. But this cynical avowal is not true. All this is a controversial sophism a boast, affectation, but it is not fact. The very man who says this is a tender husband, a self-denying father, a true friend, a warm politician, an ardent patriot, a devoted public servant, an excellent citizen. No man's life is a consistent career of selfishness. Nothing can be founded on systematic selfishness.

Let us see of what elements Religion consists, and try how far Humanity affords a base for each of these.

First, of course, Religion implies a belief. We always

except the Religion of Nature, or of the Unknowable, or the Religion of the Infinite — which are mere phrases — meaning only that the supposed believer would like to believe something if he could only make up his mind. But all serious Religion implies belief.

The belief of Theology is definite enough, but it is very limited. God made the world and Christ died for it; and it is the duty of man to worship and serve them, preparing for his soul a future of Heaven or of Hell.

Now not only in this belief in continual conflict with reason, but it has nothing whatever to say to the reason itself, throughout the whole vast range of our intellectual interests and achievements.

The creed of Humanity is not merely the belief that Humanity *is*. That is obvious. It is the belief that man's highest function consists in the true understanding of Humanity and perfecting Humanity through sympathy.

Here our whole intellectual nature is supplied with a purpose, and is concentrated on an object. To understand Humanity and its conditions is to understand History, Social Philosophy, Morals, the laws of Mind, the laws of Progress. To understand the indispensable conditions of Humanity is to understand Science, the laws of Life, the laws of Matter, the nature of the Earth on which Man abides. To perfect Humanity is to bring all our knowledge to bear on human life, to utilise science and make knowledge bear fruit for good. Man needs every shred of real knowledge attainable: but he most of all needs it made efficient; co-ordinate and systematised to working harmony. Thus the *Belief* which can alone support a religion of Humanity is science; only, Science grouped around the Science of Man, and all leading up to that — and one thing more — so ordered that it will ennoble the human heart and enrich human life.

Thus Humanity throws across our whole mental range and every process of thought, a great central creative Principle. It explains Man to himself, explains the world of Nature and his relation to it, explains to him his Duty in the double condition of his own nature and his external surrounding on this planet. But every Religion that ever was must have something more than Belief. It has some kind of external Devotion: Worship—commemoration—ceremony—thanksgiving.

It is here that the modern sceptic, agnostic, materialist, even the modern Deist, or Theosophist, is most scandalised, most satirical, or most hostile to Positivism. But what is worship? Simply the outward expression, the visible emotion, of Veneration, and of Self-surrender to a Power or a Being that we love and serve.

But no men are without it, or wish to discard it altogether. The outward expression of Veneration, Love, Devotion of Self, is not dead even in our puzzled, divided, shy, material England of to-day, on the dry ashes of the Calvinist Volcano, in the Gospel of Plutonomy and each for himself. It is not extinct even in the most negative and atheistic school. No living men show a deeper sense of Worship — if worship be the visible expression of Reverence and of Self-sacrifice — than some of the maddest communists, materialists, and social democrats. They are for ever making demonstrations of their enthusiastic regard for some public cause — some social ideal. The commemoration of Voltaire is worship, the annual visit to the graves of the slaughtered Communists is worship, the devotion to the Red Flag, or the White Flag, or the Tricolor, is worship. When Atheist, Voltairean, Democratic Paris pours out on All Saints' Day in a mass to the cemeteries, Paris is performing an act of worship, such as Protestant, serious England, with her Established Church and her thousand sects, never knew.

But Worship is a thing far other than public demonstrations in churches or processions. If Worship be the visible or conscious outpouring of our affection, attachment, self-sacrifice, it is about us ever (thanks be to Humanity) in our homes, and in our souls, alone, or in our families, as in great gatherings of men and women. All acts of public homage and respect, all private offerings of friendship and of duty are acts of Worship. All honest rejoicings at a marriage and a birth, all real mourning at a funeral, the visible emotions in the sacred quiet of the household, are acts of Worship, if only they are real, unselfish, spontaneous. The young mother as she hangs breathless to watch her child asleep, the married pair as they sit side by side watching their children as they blossom into life, the daughter at the grave of her mother, the mother weeping over the letters of her son, two friends who rest true to each other, though duty, space, or death separate them, every man who in silence and in purity of heart resolves that somebody or something shall be the better for him ere he die, every honest man who throws his heart into his work — all of these are fulfilling an irresistible act of Worship.

Away, then, with the peevish paradox of pedants and cynics that mankind has outgrown Worship. Man never was more prone to Worship, for he worships no longer in terror, ignorance, self-interest. He worships all that he finds of Good in the world; he worships freely, and he worships thoughtfully, wisely, and sweetly.

And why are we to discard this irrepressible appeal to Emotion? If human life is to be warmed and guided by a high purpose and a noble affection, we must cultivate that affection, consciously appeal to it, stimulate it, give it free play, frankly and heartily show our sense of the beauty of it, without shame and without stint. Affection, self-devotion,

social duty of all kinds, are powerfully kindled by the very act of expression. In matters of the heart the expression is the act. We love most when we show love. We grow nobler by acknowledging every real and noble resolve. We come closer to one another when we vow to stand close for ever. We surrender ourselves most purely when we are uttering our sense of adoration. Emotion, like every sound feeling, grows as we give it play. "We tire of acting," says Auguste Comte; "we tire even of thinking; we never tire of loving."

What an infinite field for Worship is there opened in the Religion of Humanity! There is the expression of our Reverence, attachment and Devotion to the onward Progress of our race, itself perpetually stimulating us to add something to its sum of good; there is the commemoration of every worthy life, the continuation of the memory of the great dead, the acknowledgment of all the unceasing Providence it provides us.

But Worship in our faith is not limited to this. Our duty to our great Western Commonwealth of nations, to our own country, to our city, to our immediate community, to our families, to those dearest and closest, our responsibility for those dependent on us, on those who serve us, on the poor around us, on all whom we can help, every quality of civic, or domestic, or personal duty, the spirit of loyalty, chivalry, of protection, of submission, of discipline, of brotherliness, of courtesy, of graciousness, every quality of man, every serious act of our public or private lives, — may alike be ennobled and inspired, when deepened by the expression of a true and pure Emotion.

I say nothing of all those solemn and public acts of expression by which Auguste Comte has proposed to celebrate the long past, the great Power, the high hopes of Humanity, a series of public commemorations going through each great epoch of civilisation.

I say nothing now of those ceremonies by which he sought to clothe every civic and domestic act with the outward and visible mark of a great social character. I say nothing of those ceremonies (which he called *sacraments*), by which he sought to stamp on the personal life of each of us the social destiny that awaits us.

I say nothing of all of these. They remain for the Future to work out. They might be to many a difficulty. They may find some further development. I insist on none of these, for they are at most but on trial, in their germ.

All that I do insist upon is this — that a direct and visible appeal to our sense of Duty is as natural now as it was when the Athenians at Salamis were heard by the Persian host chanting the songs of the Gods before the greatest battle of the world, or when French Democrats went smiling to death singing the Marseillaise.

Man cannot forego the expression of noble feeling, if he is to have noble feeling at all.

And in the History of Man, in the life of Man, in the duties and relations of man to man, we shall find an inexhaustible field for the expression of every note in the gamut of human feeling.

Thought and Feeling are not enough. We need Practice — Action. Hence the elements of Religion are not only Belief, that is, an intellectual scheme, and Worship, or an appeal to the highest Feeling, but Discipline (or Scheme of Life).

Here, again, in active life the central point of Humanity offers us a dominant Principle. Theology with its ideal Heaven and unearthly rewards always draws off its devotees from active life, treats it as a stumbling-block to godliness, has really nothing to say to it, except that to hope that it will be saintly. What more have the Metaphysics of the Universum

or the Infinite to say to active life? How is the Unknowable, or Infinity, or the Universal Mind, to be made the basis of practical energy?

Theology and Metaphysics renounce the domain of active life, as a hermit might shun a battle.

The only practical Gospel which now directs active life in the retreat of Theology and of Metaphysics from that which is the real end of Man's existence — the only Practical Gospel now current is the so-called Economic Gospel of Each for Himself, and the World coming right at last by every one pursuing his personal interest.

Between the fantastic unworldliness of Theology, and the cynical worldliness of mere Plutonomy, stands Positivism with its claim to base man's active existence on an unselfish co-operation in the practical welfare of Humanity — with no extravagant self-renunciation, but as the natural and healthy end of human activity, under the impulse of social sympathy, as in the long run the best for us all, and the truest source of happiness. This is, in fact, the principle of "The greatest happiness of the greatest number" — utilitarian in effect, though not utilitarian in motive, but social, unselfish, benevolent.

If it be said that this is an impossible ideal — a Utopian standard of duty — how much less Utopian and alien to human instincts is it than the Theological crown of glory!

If it be said that it is an appeal from the more violent selfish instincts to the less potent unselfish duties — what religion that ever deserved the name did not seek to curb the selfish instincts by invoking the superior charm and permanence of the nobler elements of the human spirit?

The practical, sensible, free service of Humanity by intelligent work towards the general well-being of the Race stands between the artificial dreaming of Theology and the

bestial self-seeking of Plutonomy, without asceticism, without unreality, without vulgarity—working happily and naturally, devoted to Industry but not exaggerating Industry, seeking material results, but only as the stepping-stone to moral results, dealing with the world like producers, citizens, politicians, but acting so that all work shall conduce to Beauty, Wisdom, Goodness.

I put this question to all who from any point of view believe that human life is in need of mending. Is anything (in this age of knowledge and civilisation) at all worth trying unless it can assert its power over the Intellectual World, the Moral World, and the Practical World?

Does any one but a professing Christian believe that Theology, in any one of its shifting forms, really asserts its power alike over all three?

Is there anything that does assert it, or can assert it—bring to this test, Pantheism or Atheism, Evolution, the Unknowable—is there anything that stands the test of all three but the Principle of referring all to the Humanity that is, that has been, that is to be?

This idea, we may say, is in the air, about us everywhere, and is ever growing up unconsciously in men's minds. Still, it does not follow but that it will meet with endless objections. But what are objections? and why need we expect to satisfy them? It is the age of objections, and of objectors: a large portion of the cultured classes think the true function of the human brain is to manufacture objections. What is called "literature" and "criticism" is for the most part the trade of supplying the public with objections, just as the business of the "Opposition" in Parliament is always to show that the Government is wrong, and of the counsel on the other side always to show that his "learned friend" has no case. Such is the fertility of the enstatic genius that the trade flour-

ishes in the Houses, in the Courts, in letters. A critic would, indeed, be a tyro if he could not find a hundred "objections" to every religion and every philosophy from Moses to the Latter-Day Saints.

But men who mean to do anything do not occupy themselves largely in satisfying objections, or the still more hopeless task of satisfying objectors. Ideas, schemes, institutions, slowly win their way upon the world by virtue of their power to assimilate mental and moral forces, and their general fitness for a given situation. In how small a degree do they succeed by logical triumphs! Without pretending any comparison which many would resent, one may say this: Christianity would have made slow way, if it had waited till it had an answer to all the philosophers; or Protestantism, if it had waited till it had satisfied the objections of its Catholic critics. Nor would what is vaguely called Liberalism or Progress have progressed very far, if it were bound to silence its opponents, those who were so by conviction, and those who were so by profession. The human faith, like every faith, will win its way by affirmations and proofs, not by rejoinders and surrebutters.

This would still be so, if the human faith were something new; but it is not new. Shouts of laughter are raised at the very idea of a New Religion. Let us grant freely that there is something laughable in a new Religion, though Moses, Christ, and Mahomet did not think the idea a laughing matter. Sober moderns, as we all now profess to be, will, however, agree that there is something at least hugely paradoxical about the idea of a really new religion. The human faith is in truth the old faith; it is the oldest of all religions; it brings the newer phases of religion into relations with the older. There is nothing really new in the Religion of Humanity except the formal and systematic embodiment of all those

yearnings of heart and imaginative visions of the world which formed the inner life of so many forms of tentative religion. Moses, St. Paul, Mahomet, and Luther now meant, as we can show, the same essential thing in a vague mystical way — so too did Buddha and Confucius — they all sought that great conception which should explain to Man himself and the World around him, the law on which both rested, so that thereby Man, finding it, should have peace, and rise to the purity and might of his full nature. And they all found peace, found purity and might, for a time in a limited degree, and they called their great key to the infinite, Jehovah, Christ, Islam, the Bible, Nirvana, the Right Rule.

All kinds of religion have sought these two things. (1) The truth of man's relation to the Universe. (2) The true source and canon of man's duty. All sorts of incomplete, poetical, or mystical answers have been given to these two questions. Positivism now simply says — (1) The true relation of Man to the Universe is the relation proved by Science; (2) the source and canon of man's duty is to be found in a true and full knowledge of human nature. How can any one call this new? Every kind of religion has tried to give the answers in a partial way, in imaginative, anthropomorphic, or fanciful impersonations. They all, says Positivism, had their strong points and should be utilised, provided they be reduced to science, that is, to systematised common sense, and be made mutually consistent.

What has happened in the case not of every new Religion (there is no such thing possible), but of every new conception of Religion, is this: that spiritual men, struck with some crying evil or obvious void in the old conception, have ardently pressed on the society of their time a new, or purer, or larger conception. In so doing, they have often neglected, sometimes have even purposely neglected, the strong side

of the old conception. All new systems or new readings of old systems conquer, when they succeed, by virtue of some great want that they fill, not by satisfying the subtlest doubt in every ingenious mind. Polytheism afforded an inexhaustible field for the fancy and the energy of ancient civic life. Christianity, burning to restore to a corrupt and cruel age the sense of purity, humility, and humanity, flung aside beauty, joy, freedom, patriotism, philosophy, and manly culture, to which Polytheism gave simple scope — in order to cast itself with passionate contrition before an ascetic and terrible image of Man and God. The Cross, Sin, Death, Damnation came into the world, doing great things, crushing out great things. Mahomet, again, trampled on the gross hagiology of the Greek Church, and called his warriors to rally round their one God and His immutable Will.

All systems of religion have insisted powerfully on some great element of spiritual life, and have been systems of religion because they did so. They were usually indifferent, contemptuous, or hostile to the great elements of their predecessors. The early Polytheists repudiated the confusion and grossness of Fetishism; the Monotheists pointed with shame and scorn to all that had been sacrificed when Venus was made a goddess, and Mars, Mithras, and Apis were jumbled into one indiscriminate pantheon; still more did the Reformers rave against all the vices of Mariolatry and hagiology, and all the corruptions of a celibate priesthood and a powerful hierarchy.

The good sense of mankind in the long run throws off these one-sided efforts to make religion first all energy and versatility; then all ecstasy and self-control; then all submission and austerity; and, finally, all mysticism and spiritual receptivity.

It is inevitable that, each time a stronger and more rational conception of religion begins to prevail, the devotees and the

advocates of the old conception should cry out that they are being robbed of the particular feature of religion which the old conception represented. The old conception invariably in course of time had come to exaggerate and even caricature its special element. Nowadays deep and tender souls cry out "where else can you find that intense force to wring and curb the heart which we have in the image of an all-seeing God in whose eyes the most secret sin, the faintest gust of passion, is an offence to be expiated only by the blood of His own Son?" No doubt it is a tremendous force and has had infinite command over human passion. But the question is whether the idea is true, consistent with the rest of man's knowledge, and on the whole an adequate explanation of human life. The question is whether people still continue to believe it; whether too much is not sacrificed in trying to get them to believe it. If the world still believes this explanation, we shall hear little of Positivism. If the world has ceased to believe it, it is useless to tell Positivists that they are without this terrific engine of morality. Positivists reply that the terrific engine having now ceased to work, it is best to fall back on such human and rational motives of social duty as moral science and history suggest.

Suppose the United Kingdom Temperance Alliance were to preach that every glass of ardent spirits had the effect of oxalic acid and would burn up the vitals of the drinker in ten minutes; suppose that temperance orators had actually persuaded a very ignorant population that this was true. The people at last find them out and take again to drink. A more sober body of temperance advocates appeal to them, in the name of moral and social duty. Whereupon the advocates of the oxalic acid theory cry out — "The most potent of all the temperance arguments is being abandoned!" Potent, no doubt, so long as it is believed in, and provided it

be true. It is not difficult to get potent arguments either for an agitation or for a religion, if you feel at liberty to resort to your invention for your moral and religious sanctions.

So too with the whole apparatus of ecstatic bliss, endless torment, seraphic rejoining with loved ones, the eternal recompense for earthly pain, the everlasting communing of congenial souls, the heavenly contemplation of infinite goodness — all these have been the force of Christianity, the force of Catholicism, the force of Protestantism. How often has the overburdened spirit felt peace amid agony and bereavement: how often have the dying lips smiled in peace: what trust and calm have beamed in the eyes of the weakest, the most afflicted, the most forsaken! We know it all. We too have felt all these things. We are not cynics, swinishly deaf to the spiritual voices. Why ask us if we have any such things in our faith; if we can give these seraphic raptures, these superhuman joys and hopes?

Certainly not. It is quite possible that no rational faith whatever has any exact equivalent to these ecstasies, or can work these miracles in subduing sense, and galvanising certain chords of emotion. Perhaps not! But the question again is, Are they true, are they real, or are they artificial? Because if they are, if men once begin to suspect that, after all, these joys are pious hopes, pious fancies, pious frauds, it will go ill with the believers as well as with the preachers.

It is idle, therefore, now to cry out that we are robbing men of this exquisite bliss, and hope, and trust. There is no trust, no bliss, or hope in it, if men come (they know not how) to doubt if it be true — rather there is an awful abyss and void. In these days the business before the orthodox is not to show how sublime or ecstatic these hopes are (if they be real)—but whether or not they are real. This is work enough for the present.

It is beside the question, therefore, to expatiate, as do curates and the semi-theological journals, on the infinite sublimity or pathos of the current gospels and creeds. Do not expatiate on their beauty; but restore us our trust in their credibility and reality. You might as well enlarge on the superior advantages of immortality here on earth, and argue that therefore it is materialism to believe in death at all. Or you might call on us to be as the Angels are, and to pass like Seraphim into serener worlds than this. The sublimity of a conception is no proof of its reality; gives us no guarantee that it is not a dream — rather the contrary. Children long to be angels, fairies, or stars. Men desire to be the best that mortal men on this planet can become.

The only question for serious instructed men in the Nineteenth Century is this: What, with all the lights of modern science, history, and philosophy, is the soundest and completest view to take of Man's place in the world, and Man's duty to himself and to others? It is quite possible that the answer may not include the ecstatic and gorgeous visions of the Gospel, but it will include a vast deal that the Gospel shuts out, and its practical effect on the entire scope of human life may be far more equable and complete.

Some Christian devotees seem in a chronic state of cataleptic predisposition. Civilisation would come to an end, or would return to the condition of the twelfth century, if this artificial condition of spiritual tension were common to the busy millions on the earth. Real religion is not to be measured by the hysterical sensibilities of a few selected men and women, who have leisure to nurse their emotions, who know very little of the world and nothing, it may be, of history. Can it be that, for all time, and for the whole human race, the conditions of Religion must be squared to the visions which the author of the *Imitation* saw in his cell, and the author of

Pilgrim's Progress saw in his prison? If we take a broad view of the spiritual manifestations of the whole human race, we shall find that this particular type of soul is one amongst many, one of the most beautiful, one of the most memorable, but still one highly artificial and strung upon a single chord. The heroism and the graces of the ancient world were not drawn from this type; nor was the imposing strength of the Eastern religions; nor are the rich and splendid resources of modern civilisation. The human faith will make no attempt to talk in the language of monks and Puritans; it will talk to men in the language of men.

We often hear that there is much uncertainty as to what Humanity is, and still more as to what its past history has been. There may be some margin of uncertainty as to what the English people is, and a greater as to what has been the history of the English people. But both ideas are amply sufficient for the feeling of patriotism and the work of politics. Humanity is a general term for a reality that can only be varied within very moderate limits, and the general course of civilisation is sufficiently clear for practical purposes. The objection to the vagueness of humanity comes but strangely from the mouths of theologians who interpret the being of the Godhead and the nature of Christ in infinite modes, all of them being professedly *a priori* hypotheses. Whatever Humanity may be, or its history may have been, it appeals exclusively to scientific proof and recorded facts. Argument and difference are possible as to the exact value of those facts, as about the solar system, or spontaneous generation. But the whole discussion from beginning to end is in the field of science; and its methods are rational and experimental.

Those who in the main adopt the scheme of Auguste Comte will think of Humanity and its Past as he does, as explained

by the whole course of positive Sociology. But the practical efficacy of the Human Synthesis will not need to wait for this. It is exerting already its influence over masses of men, who conceive of it loosely and feebly perhaps, who are almost blind to its true continuity, but who are able to feel its reality and dominant control. Since it is the real solution of the problem which have lain at the root of so many types of religion, its property is to appear by degrees through the dissolving fragments of other creeds. For a century at least, since the later half of the last century, it has been the real force that has stimulated and disciplined society. As the orthodoxies fail men and the older Churches and societies give way, men fall back instinctively and unconsciously on Humanity, for guidance, for help, for discipline. Humanity has no need to be brought down or revealed to men. It is there amongst them, as it has long been, working and shaping them. It needs only to become familiar and articulate.

What a picture of human life may we not see, as in a vision, under the influence of this vivifying principle! Underneath all lies the indispensable institution of a universal Education — an education for all, free, open, without conditions, an education which may put the capable artisan on an intellectual level with any other citizen, an education continued long after his childhood or boyhood, until the maturity of manhood, which is now only thought the privilege of the rich. An Education, universal in another sense, that it will be a real training in science, not a mechanical exercise in language, an Education leading up to a practical knowledge of man's history and his social and moral nature.

Whence is such an Education to come, it is said? Whence, but from the sense of social duty, and of social necessity in those who hold the material and intellectual resources of society, the rich and the learned? If the zeal of all the social

reformers, the conscience and public spirit of all the patriotic citizens, the patience of the man of science and the philosopher, the enthusiasm of the missionary, the evangelising spirit of the Christian, all pulled one way, and converged, as they now diverge and counteract each other, what would not result? Now 10,000 pulpits are fulminating against 10,000 newspapers, reviews, and lectures, and the fervour of the socialist reformer is quenched in the cold logic of the anti-social economist, and the crude sense of the practical statesman. Find them a common doctrine, fuse science, religion, socialism, economy, progress, conservatism, in one purpose, and the force of the educating power (now frittered away in internecine combat) would be beyond the reach of thought.

Out of such an educating body (call them philosophers, men of science, lecturers, preachers, priests, or thinkers) would rise up necessarily a spiritual, moralising force. The intellectual activity of a world based on the ever-present Image of Humanity, could not rest in Material Science. Its whole intellectual system would converge towards the focus of Man. The Science of Human Nature, as the noblest part of Science, would be the Crown and End of Science; and the noblest faculty of Man would be the subject of the Science of Human Nature. "Men of Science" would not mean men who cut up frogs, and resolve nebulæ into new star worlds; but it would primarily mean moralists, social philosophers, historians. Science, philosophy, literature, law, would not be fields for accumulating a fortune, or winning some personal prize: they would be the great functions on which society itself depends.

Nor would this education be an intellectual one alone. It would be a training of the moral nature, of the feelings, of the heart. Women would be the great educators and moral regenerators — none being doomed to struggle in an idle

competition in physical force with men, they would form the spirit of the young, become the moral providence of the home, and the moral inspirers of society — presenting in public and in private life the highest standard of spiritual truth. And life in public and private would be continually renewed by a set of institutions and practices that recalled to us its meaning and referred it to its higher purpose.

Enlightened by a systematic and scientific philosophy, moralised and dignified by a constant appeal to duty, man's active life would be set free to devote all its resources to the amelioration of our human lot. Industry would be moderated, inspired, and moralised, until it purged itself of the detestable aim of piling up fortunes and securing personal enjoyments, and set itself to raise the condition of the workers themselves, capital being held in trust as the public instrument of the community, captains of industry, feeling themselves as much bound to watch over the welfare of their soldiers, as are captains of armies in the field. The business of the rich would be to use wealth in the noble spirit of social advancement that the best philosophers have shown in the use of their knowledge, and the best rulers have shown in the use of their power. The incalculable resources of modern civilisation and the boundless ingenuity of modern invention would all be resolutely concentrated, not in the task of scrambling for wealth over the bodies and souls of the creators of wealth, but in an intelligent resolve to mitigate the lot of the toiling masses, and to provide against the consequences of social disorder. A few generations would suffice to make the world forget (as if it were the dark ages) this sordid Battle of Pelf (with its self-help and survival of the unfittest) in which we live, until Industry itself passed by an almost unconscious transition into the mere cultivation of Art and Beauty, and work was concentrated in the expression of pure and noble Feeling.

In Humanity human life meets and rests at last. Science and Philosophy by it become human, moral, co-ordinated. Devotion becomes rational and practical. Art becomes religious, social, creative. Industry becomes beneficent, unselfish, ennobling. Politics become a public duty, not an ignoble game. Education becomes a rational preparation for a true life. Religion becomes the bond of spirits within, and of multitudes without. The People enter upon their true Sovereignty, for their well-being is the grand object and care of society. Women at last receive their due place, for theirs is the largest part in the moral and spiritual guidance of their age. The Past is summed up and expressed in the Present, and the two become the natural parent of the Future. And so the whole human race slowly after centuries puts off the habit of War, as it has put off the habit of Slavery, and becomes conscious of the vast Brotherhood whose mission is to people and to improve this Planet.

VII

AIMS AND IDEALS

1901

“The North American Review,” publishing a series of articles by different hands on the Aims and Ideals of various systems of Religion, invited me to address the American public on the Aims and Ideals of Positivism. This paper appeared in March 1901.

POSITIVISM is at once a philosophy, a polity, and a religion — all three harmonised by the idea of a supreme Humanity, all three concentrated on the good and progress of Humanity. This combination of man’s whole thoughts, general activity, and profound feeling in one dominant Synthesis is the strength of Positivism, and at the same time an impediment to its rapid growth. The very nature of the Positivist scheme excludes the idea of wholesale conversion to its system, or of any sudden increase of its adherents. No philosophy before, no polity, no religion was ever so weighted and conditioned. Each stood alone on its special merit. Positivism only has sought to blend into coherent unity the three great forces of human life.

In the whole history of the human mind, no philosophy ever came bound up with a complete scheme of social organisation, and also with a complete scheme of religious observance. Again, the history of religion presents no instance of a faith which was bound up with a vast scientific

education, and also with a set of social institutions and political principles. Hitherto, all philosophies have been content to address man's reason and to deal with his knowledge, leaving politics, morality, industry, war, and worship open questions for other powers to decide. So, too, every religion has appealed directly to the emotions or the imagination, but has stood sublimely above terrestrial things and the passing cares of men.

A mere philosophical idea, like Evolution, can sweep across the trained world in a generation, and is accepted by the masses when men of learning are agreed. A practical movement, such as Reform, Self-government, Socialism, or Empire, catches hold of thousands by offering immediate material profit. Men of any creed, of any opinion, can join in the definite point. This has given vogue to so many systems of thought, so many political nostrums, such a variety of religious revivals. It has also been the cause of their ultimate failure, however great their temporary success. They have been one-sided, partial, mutually destructive. A religion which ignores science finds itself at last undermined and discredited by facts. A polity which has no root in history and in the science of human nature, ends in confusion, like the Social Contract of the Rights of Man. And a philosophy which is too lofty to teach men how to live, or what to worship, is flung aside by the passions, emotions, interests of busy men.

Positivism insists that the cause of all these failures has been the attempt to treat human nature in sections and by special movements, whereas human nature is an organic whole and can only be treated as an organism of infinite cohesion. Positivism is the first attempt to appeal to human nature *synthetically* — that is, to regard man as equally a logical being, a practical being, and a religious being, so that his thought, his energy, his devotion may all coincide in the same

object. The Christian preacher may cry aloud that this object is God and Salvation. But when he is asked to explain the relation of Salvation to Conic Sections or to Home Rule, his answers are vague. The Agnostic philosopher, again, assures us that this centre of thought is Evolution; but how the devout soul is to worship Evolution, or how the workman is to better his lot by Evolution, are problems which the Agnostic philosopher finds troublesome and idle. The Radical Reformer insists on a brand-n^ew 'set of institutions, and trusts that men's beliefs, habits, desires, yearnings and religions will soon settle themselves. But this is the last thing they ever do.

Hitherto all philosophies, all polities, all religions have sought to treat human nature as a quack who should treat a sick man on the assumption that he had no brain, or that his nerves were of steel, or that his stomach was to be ignored. They have had successes, as nostrums do have. The Positive Synthesis, for the first time, provides the harmony for thought, activity, and feeling. But, since almost the whole of our real knowledge is limited to this planet, and certainly the whole of what we can do is so limited, and since our best aspirations and ideals are human (or, at least, anthropomorphic), it follows that any true Synthesis of human nature as a whole must centre in Humanity. That is the key to the power of Positivism, and also to its very gradual advance.

That which is nothing unless it be comprehensive, systematic, synthetic, naturally finds arrayed against it the popular currents of the hour. There never was an age so deeply intoxicated with specialism in all its forms as our own, so loftily abhorrent of anything systematic, so alien to *synthesis*, that is, organic co-ordination of related factors. Everything nowadays is treated in infinitesimal subdivisions. Each biologist sticks to his own microbe; each historian to his own "period";

the practical man leaves "ideas" to the doctrinaire, and the divine leaves it to the dead worldling to bury his dead in his own fashion. Specialism is erected into a philosophy, a creed, a moral duty, an intellectual antiseptic. It is this dispersive habit which makes our art so mechanical, our religion so superficial, our philosophy so unstable, and our politics so chaotic. A movement, of which the first aim is to stem the torrent of this dispersiveness, naturally finds welcome only with those whom our moral, material, and mental anarchy has profoundly saddened and alarmed.

Positivism, then, so far as it is a religion, does not seek to be accepted on impulse, or by rapture, under a gush of devotional excitement. When Peter preached, "Repent and be baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost!" the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. But Saint Peter cared little for science or philosophy, and even less for politics and art. Positivism asks to be accepted as the result of a great body of convergent convictions, or not to be accepted at all. Being a religion, it is not a thing to be decided by the authority of the learned. Every brain must reason it out for itself; every heart must feel its enthusiasm; every character must resolve to live and die by it in daily life.

It is not like a political movement which aims at forming a party, a militant league, or a revolution. It never appeals to the instinct of combat; it inflames no passion of self-interest; it panders not to the spirit of destruction, to the spirit of equality, or the love of mockery and satire. It offers nothing immediate, no panacea to make every one blissful, or rich, or wise. It insists that all reforms must be gradual, complicated, spiritual and moral, not material and legislative. It discourages all immediate and direct remedies for social and political maladies, and ever preaches the humble and

difficult method of progress by mental education and moral regeneration. Now, those reformers who are ready to sacrifice all their impatient hopes, all royal roads to the millennium, all revolutionary dreams for establishing Utopia, such spirits are few and rare.

The problem before Positivism is threefold; each side being practically equal in importance and also in difficulty. It seeks to transfer religion from a supernatural to a scientific basis, from a theological to a human creed; to substitute in philosophy a relative anthropo-centric synthesis for an absolute, cosmical analysis; to subordinate politics, both national and international, to morality and religion. No doubt, in these three tasks the religion is the dominant element. The change in its meaning and scope is the most crucial in the history of human civilisation. The change involves two aspects, at first sight incompatible and even contradictory. The one involves the surrender of the supernatural and theological mode of thought; the other is the revival, or rather the amplification, of the religious tone of mind.

Positivism, thus, with one hand, has to carry to its furthest limits that abandonment of the supernatural and theological field which marks the last hundred years of modern thought, and yet, with the other hand, it has to stem the tide of materialism and anti-religious passion, and to assert for religion a far larger part than it ever had, even in the ages of theocracy and sacerdotalism. The vulgar taunt that Positivism is anti-religious arises from ignorance. The constant complaint of Positivism is that religion, in all its Neo-Christian phases, has shrunk into a barren formula. The essence of Positivism is to make religion permeate every human action, thought, and emotion. And the idea of humanity alone can do this. Deity cannot say, "*Nihil humani a me alienum.*" Humanity can and does say this; whereas, in logic, the formula of

theology — the formula in which it glories — is “*Omne humanum a me alienum.*” Omnipotence, as such, can have no concern with the Binomial Theorem, or a comedy of Molière, or female suffrage, or old-age pensions, or a Wagner opera — that is, with ninety-nine parts of human life and interest. The result is that theological religion has less and less to do with human life. If religion is ever to be supreme, it must be anthropo-centric.

But, on the other hand, an age, so ardently materialist and scientific as our own, is antipathetic to the idea of religion presuming to interfere at all. The ordinary agnostic or sceptic, if he abstains in public from Voltairean mockery, systematically treats religion, even the religious tendency or tone of mind, as an amiable weakness and negligible quantity. He is little concerned to attack it, for he finds it every day more willing to get out of his way, and to wrap itself up in transcendental generalities. This is the temper which Positivism has to subdue. But it finds the scientific and positive minds scandalised at the suggestion of any revival of religion, whilst the religious world is scandalised by the repudiation of theology. A movement, having aims apparently so little reconcilable can only find prepared minds here and there to accept it. Yet its strength lies in this: it is the only possible reconciliation of two indestructible tendencies, equally deep-rooted in the human mind — the craving for the assurance of demonstrable realities, and the craving for faith and devotion as the supreme control of human life.

This summary sketch of the Positivist Synthesis of Thought, Feeling, and Life, is not intended as any explanation of it — an elaborate volume could not give room for that — but as a mere preliminary to dealing with the question I am asked to answer: What are the present position, aims, and ideals of Positivism?

Well! Auguste Comte, the founder of Positivism, a professor at the *École Polytechnique*, died in Paris in the year 1857, having put forth his system of philosophy in 1842, and having completed his system of Polity and Religion in 1854. There are now organised bodies of men, holding and teaching these ideas, in most of the parts of Europe and also of the Transatlantic continent. Speaking for England, for which only I am entitled to speak, the English groups, not very numerous bodies in London and in five or six principal towns, prefer to present the Positivist Synthesis in somewhat different aspects, but do not disagree in any essential principle. Some of these groups choose to insist on the strictly religious side of the Positivist scheme, regarding it as a Church in the ordinary sense of the term, and attempting to put into ceremonial practice the cult described in the fourth volume of Comte's *Politique*. This neither Comte himself ever did, nor has his direct successor and principal disciple done so, nor have Comte's own personal friends in France. Without passing any opinion upon the ultimate realisation of what, for my own part, I regard as a striking and interesting Utopia, neither I nor my colleagues in the English Positivist Committee have felt either the time to be ripe for any such undertaking, or the development of our movement to be adequate to make any attempt of the kind practical or serious. The attempt has led in South America to some farcical egotism, and the experiment elsewhere has led to no encouraging result. Personally, I have no wish to see the pontifical method carried any further, and it has little interest for me.

For my own part, from the formation by Comte's successor in Paris of the English Positivist Committee, of which I have been President for twenty years, I have always opposed everything that could tend to form "a sect." By "sect," I mean

the Pharisaical separation of a body of persons from their fellow-citizens, priding themselves on certain special observances, and living an exclusive life of their own. All this is to us so abhorrent, that we would rather run the risk of becoming too easy than of becoming narrow sectaries. Accordingly, we have been, from the first, of the world and in the world around us; having no shibboleths, no creeds, no tests of orthodoxy, not even any roll of membership. We have always been ready to work with all humane movements of a kindred sort. We have no priests, no recognised form of worship, no ritual, and no special canon of adhesion. They who choose to come amongst us to follow our lectures, or to discuss our views, are welcome to come. Those who help on the work, by labour or by gifts in money or in kind, are of us and with us, so long as it pleases them to continue such co-operation.

Everything about our work is voluntary, gratuitous, open. Newton Hall is, first and foremost, a Free School; on its notices is written: "All meetings and lectures free." Nothing is paid to those who lecture, or demanded from those who attend. No questions are asked, no collection is made, no seats are paid for or reserved. Those who choose to subscribe can do so, without giving any pledge, and withdraw when they choose to withdraw. Lectures in science, in history, in languages, in art, even musical training and classical concerts, have all been free and public. And tens of thousands of men and women have been present from time to time, who would decline to call themselves Positivists, and who might at the time feel little more than sympathy and interest. The aim of our body has been to form a school of thought, not to found a sect; to influence current opinion, not to enrol members of a party; to uphold an ideal of religion which should rest on positive science whilst permeating active

life. It is an idle question to ask, "What are the numbers, or the machinery, of such a body?"

Newton Hall, opposite the Public Record Office, in London, has now been open nearly twenty years. It was so named because it stands on the ground purchased for the Royal Society by Sir Isaac Newton, its President, in 1710; and, during the eighteenth century, the Hall, built thereon by the Royal Society for its collections, contained the first nucleus of the British Museum. There public, free lectures on Positivist philosophy, science, morality and religion have been carried on continually during autumn, winter, and spring, together with classes for the study of mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, history, languages and music. The greater names in the Positivist Calendar of 558 Worthies of all ages and nations have been commemorated on special centenaries, those of musicians by appropriate musical pieces. In the summer months, these lectures have been extended in the form of pilgrimages to the birthplace, tomb, or residence of the illustrious dead, and lectures at the public museums, galleries, and ancient monuments. In connection with Newton Hall there have been social parties, libraries, and Guilds of young men and young women. So far, the work of the Positivist body in London has been that of a Free School and People's Institute.

It may be asked, In what way does such a Free School differ from many other similar institutions? The answer is in the fact that the entire scheme of education given in Newton Hall is *synthetic* and *organic*.—concentrated on the propaganda of the Positive Philosophy and the Religion of Humanity. Leaving it to other movements to promote miscellaneous information and promiscuous culture of a general kind, the aim of all Positivist teaching is to inculcate the cardinal doctrines of the Positive belief, the central

principles of Positive morality, and the vital sense of the Human Religion. In the first Report issued from Newton Hall, for 1881, we said:

The very existence of Positivism as a scientific system of belief depends on the institution of a complete course of education, and the formation of an adequate body of competent teachers. There is, on positive principles, no road to stable religious convictions except by the way of knowledge of real things; and there is no royal road to real knowledge other than the teaching of competent instructors and the systematic study of science in the widest sense. One of the purposes for which Newton Hall has been opened is to offer free popular training in the essential elements of scientific knowledge. Our plan is but one of the many attempts around us to found a People's School. It differs from almost all of these in the following things:

“1. It will be on principle strictly free; no teacher being paid, and no fee being received.

“2. The education aimed at, not being either professional or literary, will follow the scheme of scientific instruction laid down for the future by Auguste Comte.

“3. Whilst having no theological or metaphysical element, the entire course of study will aim at a religious, that is, a social purpose, as enabling us to effect our due service to the cause of Humanity, by understanding the laws which regulate the world and our own material and moral being.”

In pursuance of this scheme of education, courses of lectures, have been given by graduates of the universities, most of them having been professors, examiners, and lecturers in various sciences, arts, or history. The courses have been followed, in many cases, during the whole of that period, and many of the students have obtained a solid general education, especially in the various branches of history, biography, and political philosophy. It is not pretended that this has been done by any large numbers. Other institutions of the kind have enjoyed much greater resources and have attracted far more numerous attendants. The reason is

obvious. For one man who has the patience or the thoughtfulness to put himself under the curriculum of a laborious training, for the sole end of obtaining an intellectual and moral guidance in a definite system, there are always ninety-nine who are ready to pick up any desultory, entertaining, or marketable knowledge which may be offered to them without too much mental discipline or any distinctive labels. To enter a Positivist Hall, much less to join a Positivist class, or to subscribe to a Positivist fund, requires in these days of prejudice and lampooning, a certain mental detachment and a real moral courage. The direct object of our courses is to inculcate Positive convictions with a view to a Positivist life. And as the public which is prepared to accept these terms is as yet not numerous, our hearers must be rather described as "fit, though few."

If the formation of coherent Positivist convictions by a scientific education be the first task of such a movement, it is far from being the sole task. The control of all action, whether political, economic, or international, by moral judgment is a cardinal duty imposed on Positivists in all places and at all times. Accordingly, for forty years English Positivists have ardently supported the just claims of Labour against the oppression of Capitalism, the just demand of the People to full incorporation in the State, which exists mainly for the use and improvement of the People; they have maintained the just demand of the Irish nation to be recognised as an indestructible national unit; they have protested against a series of unjust wars and the incessant efforts of British Imperialism to crush out one independent race after another. All this is no recent thing. Forty years ago, the founders of the Positivist group in England began to take public action on behalf of the organised Trades Unions. In 1867 the Positivist Society appealed to Parliament through Mr. John

Bright, M.P., on behalf of the Irish Nationalists; and they have never ceased to uphold the same cause. In 1881 they appealed to the Government to recognise the full independence of the Transvaal Republic. And to-day they are the first to insist on the same policy as being that of Justice and Honour.

There has never been an unjust annexation or a wanton war in Europe, Asia, or Africa within the last thirty years, when the Positivist body has not raised its voice to plead for morality and justice, regardless of the popular cry for Empire and malignant sneers at "Little Englandism." The record of these efforts may be seen in the *Essays* of Dr. R. Congreve, the first to form a Positivist body in England; in the "Positivist Comments on Public Affairs, 1878-1892"; and, from 1893 to 1900, in the eight volumes of the *Positivist Review*. In an article on the "Positivist Comments" I wrote:

The Positivist Society has no reason to shrink from a review of its policy over this period under five different administrations. It is a policy independent of party: national, patriotic, and devoid of any petty or factious criticism. Its sole aim is to plead for the real honour and good of England, in the interest of peace, the harmony of nations, respect for other races, religions, and honourable ambitions, and mainly for the cause of general civilisation.

These "Comments," over fourteen years, I said:

Embody a coherent and systematic policy dealing with England's international relations as a whole, and weighing the ultimate and indirect effect of each proposed action as affecting the peace of the world and the true cause of civilisation. It is not a policy of peace-at-any-price, nor of a Little-England, nor of uninstructed sentiment, nor of any prejudice of creed, or race, much less of party, of democratic faction, or mischief-making. It is a policy that considers the *past*, and still more the *future*, and not merely the *present*—a policy that respects the rights and dignity of other nations as much as our own (*Positivist Review*, iv. 73).

Of course, such a policy as this, publicly pursued in times

of intense social and political excitement, could not fail to strain the cohesion of the Positivist propaganda and to limit its progress. Bound by our most sacred principles to uphold definite views of national and international morality, we could not fail to encounter the prejudices of party, of class, of race, of patriotism, in their hours of keenest heat. Though resolutely abstaining from any party entanglement and from any criticism of practical applications of principle, it was in the last degree difficult to prevent some divergences of view, and impossible not to drive away thousands of those who were otherwise disposed to join. No system of thought, no economic scheme, certainly no religious movement, ever had to meet such inherent obstacles to acceptance. A philosophy appeals to thought, but it does not meddle with angry political debates. The social reformer has his own difficulties, but he does not rouse up the passions of politicians, party, and journalism. The religious reformer renders unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and is absorbed in the higher interests of the Soul and its Salvation. But Positivism, because it is a Polity, as much as it is a Philosophy and a Religion, is continually forced to face the most angry storms of popular delirium and of political passion. And never so much as to-day.

Lastly, the distinctive aim of Positivism is to promulgate the conception of a real religion based on positive science. No religion can be stable or dominant, if it rests on hypotheses and aspirations, which are necessarily dreamy and in constant flux. If religion, in our age of realities, is to be based on acknowledged proofs, its object must be earthly and human. The Supreme Power, dominant on earth and over man, of which we have scientific knowledge is Humanity. And the ideal of Positivism is gradually to form the sense of a religion of Humanity.

And this is, also, the main difficulty that Positivism has

to overcome. Denouncing, as it does, the insolent folly of Atheism, and also the arid nullity of Agnosticism, it is yet difficult to convince the religious minded that Positivism can be anything but a new attack on Christianity and on Theism. Neither in open controversy, nor in private meditation, does the true Positivist hold the belief that the Infinite All came about by chance or made itself. But the orthodox controversialist perversely confounds him with those who do hold the atheistic creed, and this becomes the source of rooted antipathy and prejudice. The Positivist neither denies Creation with the atheist, nor is he satisfied, with the agnostic, to boast that he knows nothing as to the religious problem. He simply says that, whatever higher paths may yet be known, the historic conception of Humanity and its practical providence offers all the essential elements of a religious faith.

This does not satisfy the Theist, and the forms of Theism are infinitely vague, indefinite, mystical, or even verbal, almost as numerous as the individual theists. A well-known man of letters thus summed up his creed: "He fancied there was a sort of a something!" Any of us might say that, and not find it a working religion. It is the very definiteness, the undeniable reality of Humanity, its close touch upon every phase of human life, that repels so many anxious wanderers in the limitless wilderness of Theology. In these days of shallow spiritualism, the weaker brethren will cling to anything that is cloudy, unintelligible, transcendental. And their practical Gods too often are Mammon and Moloch.

Much less is Positivism an attack on Christianity. It is the rational development of Christianity, its incorporation with science and philosophy. Not, certainly, with the miraculous and supernatural dogmas of Christendom, but with the humanity of the Gospel in its spiritual ideal, and the moral and social ideals of the Christian churches. No

doubt, the Christian ideal is but a fractional part of the Positivist ideal, just as the Christian ideal is only in touch with a fractional part of human nature and man's life on earth. But so far as this Christian ideal is honestly human, and essentially permanent, Positivism is destined to give it a vast development. But this is not enough for those who still hanker after the Athanasian Creed or the Westminster Confession, or even some more inscrutable label.

The human type of religion must radically differ from the theological type, for it can have nothing of the violent, ecstatic, sensational character which is inherent in Monotheism. Positivism is an adult and mature phase of religion, primarily addressed to adults, to men and women of formed character and trained understanding. It is a manly and womanly religion, full of manly and womanly associations and duties. Hence, it must grow gradually, work equably, and be marked by endurance, reserve, good sense, completeness, more than by passion, fanaticism, and ecstatic self-abandonment. When they ask us: Where are the tremendous sanctions, spasmodic beatitudes, penances, raptures, beatific visions and transcendent mysteries of Christianity, — we can only smile. These things belong to the childhood of man, the fairy tale of religion. The "customs" of Dahomey, the sacrifices of Polytheism and Mosaism disgust the maturity of man. And so Christianity will never satisfy the later ages of civilisation, until it is rational from top to bottom, co-extensive with human life, and in close touch with our latest culture and all forms of healthy manliness and womanliness. Religion is not to be for ever nourished by mere hysterical emotions, and vague yearnings for what we cannot rationally conceive.

Religion, so reconstituted, will lose much of its rapturous and ecstatic character. It will gain in solidity, constancy,

and breadth. Instead of being a thing of transcendental hopes and fears, stimulated on Sundays and occasional moments, but laid aside, if not doubted, for the rest of man's active time, religion will be a body of scientific convictions, poetic emotions, and moral habits, in close relation with all our thoughts, acts, and feelings, and naturally applying to everything we do, or desire, or think. It will be part of the citizen's daily life: more social than personal, more civic than domestic, more practical than mystical. It will give ample scope to the personal, the domestic, even the mystical side of human nature, within the control of reason and the claims of active duty. Religion will thus mean the guidance of right living by the light of personal and social duty as taught by a systematic Sociology. Its creed will be a synthetic Philosophy, resting on the general body of positive science. And its worship will be the expression of loyalty to Humanity in all its phases, as manifested in its true servants, the known or the unknown, the living or the dead, of all ages and of every race.

VIII

Day of Humanity,
100.

January 1,
1888.

A POSITIVIST PRAYER

1888

These sentences, which form, not a Prayer but an Exhortation, were usually repeated before the annual and occasional Addresses in lieu of Invocations and devotional supplications.

IN THE NAME OF HUMANITY

Order and Progress. — Live for Others.

Live Openly.

<i>The Principle</i>	.	.	.	<i>Love.</i>
<i>The Foundation</i>	.	.	.	<i>Order.</i>
<i>The End</i>	.	.	.	<i>Progress.</i>

IN words which are inscribed on the writings and the tomb of Auguste Comte, we acknowledge that the moving spirit of our lives should be regard for others; for those, first, of our own household and family, for those next of our own country, and lastly, for the whole race of man.

May we all learn to live for others, for only thus do we truly live. To live for others, not for self, is the real happiness of each of us, as it is our plain and simple duty.

But we cannot live truly, unless we also know aright. We must know the world in which our life is placed; we must

know the human society of which we are children and members; we must know the mind and spirit of man.

So, too, the very end of life is to press onwards ever to a higher state; towards a truer sense of duty for each of us, a purer form of life for our human kind.

Thus, then, may we grow day by day in affection; in the spirit of goodness, reverence, attachment; seeking to know all that we need to know, in order to do our duty more steadfastly, wisely, and usefully: with a deep sense of our own unworthiness and individual littleness, in earnest trust in the glorious Power which it is our happiness to love and to serve.

We acknowledge in Humanity, in the Past, the Present, the Future of Man, the source of the best things that we possess, our protector and comforter when evil things threaten us, the end and object of our work and hope.

May we, who are met together to-day, shape our lives in public and in private by the light of this unceasing Providence. May the thought of it comfort, guide, and inspire us. May it be about us by day and by night; may it enter into all we do and feel, and may it be present to us in the hour of death.

And now at the opening of another year, let us recall to memory the infinite ages of the Dead, the unnumbered myriads of the Living, and the yet more incalculable host of the generations that are to be.

Let this day be given to Humanity in all the fulness of that word; without restriction of creed, or race, or age, to those who have been, that are, and are to come, in the common bond of human brotherhood.

IX

THE PRESENTATION OF INFANTS

1891

WE meet to-day to take part in what is the first, the most simple, and the most universal of all rites of our Positive faith, as it is of every other faith — indeed, we may say of almost any settled society whatever. All communities of human beings to be found on the planet, or that we read of in history, even the rude groups of wild huntsmen and shepherds, have some formal mode of welcoming the birth of a new life into their body, and accepting it with hope, good wishes, and kindly thoughts. There is nothing in our gathering here to-day of a special and peculiar kind; we are introducing no novelty; we are not imitating the rites of any kind of theology or even of any purely religious community. Our simple act is as old as human society, as common and universal as the sense of brotherhood in human nature.

And so we meet, that the parents of these little ones before us may in our presence, as representatives of the great public to which we all belong, take up as it were the membership of their children, present them before us as new and tender nurselings of our English people and our human race, may ask our good wishes for them and our good-will to accept them amongst us, and to help them; — that for themselves they may acknowledge in presence of friends and neighbours, brothers and sisters, their own desire to do their duty

by these children and bring them up in the way they should walk in honesty and usefulness through life.

This rite is one of those which our master Auguste Comte has thought fit to call Sacraments, not meaning thereby any sort of supernatural proceeding — but that real consecration of the great epochs in our life which results from manly resolves made public to friends and companions, and the formal expression by others of their sympathy with those to whom one of these turning-points of life has come. Now the word Sacrament is not a Catholic phrase, nor in its origin had it anything to do with Priests or Churches. It is, as we have before seen, an old Roman word, and it means the vow or solemn promise of the soldier before the army and its chiefs to do his duty like a man and to be true to his colours. Auguste Comte foresaw a time when — the whole of life, being consciously and nobly devoted to a social purpose, and accepted in a manly spirit of public acknowledgement — all the great turning-points in the lives of men and women should be recognised by some solemn public promise of the kind; and that promise should be ratified by the community as a real and a serious engagement.

The birth of a child, the beginning of its serious education, its entry into life, marriage, the adoption of a profession, the maturity of our powers, the close of an active career, the burial of the dead, and the honouring of those worthy to live in our memory — each of these forms an epoch for which the future will find fitting modes of commemoration.

The purpose of all these acts of commemoration — of these sacraments, the meaning of the phrase *Sacrament* to us is simply this — it is the formal reminder to us in each great step in life that our individual existence is bound up hour by hour with the far vaster social existence, that we depend at every instant of our lives on the great force of

collective Humanity which surrounds us like atmosphere, and that all true and happy life is to be found in the service of Humanity.

The faith which unites us we call *Positive*, because we think that positive science has proved that the individual is helpless and miserable without society. And we call it the Religion of Humanity because we feel that a truly religious steadiness and purity may be given to life by the constant reference of our thoughts and acts, and feelings, to the sum of collective Humanity. On the one hand, it is a solid truth; on the other, it dignifies our whole bearing and spirit. The steady and onward march of this Power is simply the tale of civilisation itself. Whilst entirely disclaiming any absolute goodness or power in this sum of human civilisation, not shutting our eyes to its manifest shortcomings, admitting the weaknesses, and follies, and vices we find around us, we see that this might of collective Humanity is relatively to us all the grandest object of thought of which we have real knowledge. It is as far superior to each one of us in permanence and immunity from death, as it is in strength, knowledge, wisdom, and beneficence. If there be still vaster Powers in the Universe neither science nor tradition has as yet revealed to us their ways of working, their law or their will. Our reason tells us that Humanity is a living Providence to each of us. What we have to do in order to become in the full sense imbued with the Religion of Humanity, is consciously to acknowledge this in our hearts and express it in our lives.

What, then, more natural to any body of people who feel this assurance in their hearts, than to recognise in some simple way the entrance into the fellowship of this great world of a new life: a life that depends for its continuance hour by hour on the care and love of others, a life the future

of which for good or for evil may be of such incalculable import in the time to come, *must* be so full of import to some of us in the days to come, and to us parents at any rate, is bound up with all we can imagine of misery or happiness? What, I say, can be more natural than that society should be represented and acknowledge the interest which it has in the issue, its hopes, its sense of responsibility, the great stake it has in this young member for better or for worse?

Just so, in some rude tribe of hunters, the father acknowledges his child in presence of his comrades, trusting he may become one day a young brave. Just so, in Greece or Rome, the father took up the child whom he recognised as worthy to bear arms one day for the Republic. So Jews, Mahometans, Buddhists, Confucians, have all been wont to gather the neighbours around them to commemorate the birth of a child to the household. I know, it is the fashion of our time to profess that the world has outgrown all outward ceremonies and rites; to think that reasonable men and women of the future will go about their work without public celebrations of any kind, without marking off one day or one hour from another, resorting not at all to sacraments or forms either civil or religious.

But is this really so? Is it not rather the contrary that is true? The sacraments and rites of the churches are indeed every day more incongruous and irksome to many. The other-worldliness of their promises and demands, the super-human and therefore anti-social spirit of these religious rites has alienated the mass and profoundly disgusts the thoughtful. Human nature revolts when we are told that a sweet infant is a child of wrath, and can be converted by a rite into a child of God. The mystical value of a set of words, or of a gesture, the supernatural effect of New Birth upon the child itself, the magical transformation in its soul, which

they think is produced by a mere mechanical action — this it is which makes so many earnest men and women revolt from all outward ceremonies whatever, and think that in the wiser future the epochs of life will pass for us all in silence and secrecy as quietly as the forenoon glides into the afternoon — unperceived and unrecorded.

But it is certainly not true that the world shows any tendency to abandon the instinctive desire of social man to mark the great occasions of life by a social expression of some kind. We may turn from the most trivial to the most momentous passages in our daily lives. When a new ruler, or a new parliament, or a new institution begins its career, its very authority is hardly looked upon as admitted until some kind of installation has been publicly performed. In monarchic countries the coronation of a new sovereign is actually an essential part of his title. We open our House of Commons, our Courts of Justice, our Town Halls, our Galleries of Art, our Museums, our Schools, with some kind of formal acknowledgment of their public importance and some kind of dedication to the public of the work they are about to effect.

Year by year, session by session, term by term, these formal introductions to our work are the commonest and most spontaneous of our gatherings. When a railway is thrown open to the service of the public, or an exhibition of industry is opened, when a great ship is first started on its career of battle with the waters and the winds, when a regiment receives a new standard as its symbol in peace and point of rallying in war — wherever man consciously enters on a new field of collective work, it is the habit of to-day as it has been from the dawn of civilised life, to mark the occasion by a ceremony. We are in danger rather of being wearied by the number and the monotony of these occasions, when princes

and princesses, ministers, and grandees, are gathered in antique and uneasy trappings to do nothing in particular and to say commonplaces in a hollow and rather shy and *jéjune* way. There is certainly no tendency to dispense with ceremonials of the kind. And if they are so often stupid and unmeaning, the fault is surely for the want of high and noble ways in regarding their social importance; and because the theologies have succeeded so completely in divorcing such things from all that in their decay they regard as the sphere of religion.

And are the private epochs in our family life in the habit of passing without recognition? We are not more prone than our ancestors to let pass the birthdays of our children, the wedding-day of the parents, the opening of a new year, our entrance into a new home, the return of an absent member of the family, his accession to man's estate, and many such incidents of our home and social life. The world will be a dull place when the children are forbidden to keep a birthday, when a son can return to the hearth, when the family can settle in a new abode, and there shall be no sign or festive act to mark it; not a simple gift shall ever pass to bring back the memory of the day, not a friend or a neighbour come to wish us joy; neither song, nor dance, nor common meal be permitted; nor cheery words be spoken as the long-expected day arrives — but we all go on like the brute at his mill-round of toil, and the days are to pass as the trains go gloomily on along the circle of the underground railway. Human nature cries out against this millennium of the Gradgrinds and the Pecksniffs.

And if the opening of a new epoch in life, or the dedication of a new building be so universally the occasion of a social celebration, shall the opening of a new life, the birth into our community of a new being, pass without any sign? We who

flock and make high festival when we open a new hall or a new gallery, when we christen a ship or a bell, or warm a new house, are we to debar ourselves from all celebration of a thing so momentous and so touching as the coming of a new child into our family, the birth of a new life into our common world? What are the buildings or the museums in beauty and closeness of sympathy with us when compared to one little child, with its infinite possibilities of human worth, its untold power of receiving from us and of bringing to us, both sorrow and joy? We who would think it so harsh to taboo the birthdays in a household, have we nothing for the day of which the birthdays are only the echo? We to whom the phases of life are the occasion of so many domestic festivals, have we no serious or religious word to utter over the infinite solemnity of life itself?

That our public and private ceremonies are so often formal and empty, without the very germ of religion, that our religious rites have become so wearisome and unnatural to us, is indeed the consequence of that supernatural type of religion, which has no part or care for our merely worldly life, whilst it studiously confines its religion to the region of the unreal, the fantastic, and the visionary. The conception of Humanity, the religion of proof and reality, gives us a new and sure ground for uniting both in one: religion and human life are brought again into one plane. Our domestic enjoyments and our daily life of action, sympathy, and thought, are found capable of a religious and truly noble treatment; whilst our religious habits and belief become as perfectly reasonable as any of the practices of social existence or the teachings of science.

To-day, then, the parents of three families bring their little ones to the face of our community, with their neighbours and friends, and those who have undertaken to supplement

and guarantee their duties; they come here to acknowledge the task that as parents they have accepted, and to ask the good-will and help of the community. It is the first and simplest, perhaps the commonest of all these rites in life. Accident or necessity may prevent many of us from any due commemoration of other events in our lives; even death itself, inevitable as it is, may come upon us away from all who will duly surround it with honour, as it does to those who die by water or fire, or battle, in the storm, the wilderness, or uncivilised lands. But the acceptance of the child should be a practice without exception, common and familiar to us all, the earnest of all that is to come in life.

The christening of the infant, as was natural and inevitable in purely transcendental religion, has come to be regarded in the Churches as a thing of some special (nay of mystical) value to the infant itself. It has been surrounded with fantastic symbolism, and has degenerated at last into an ignoble legerdemain, and badge of exclusion and narrowness. In our simple rite we have no symbol, for we symbolise nothing that we do not do. And what we do, we say plainly and openly — we present the child to the community, and we accept it in the hope that it shall be trained to do its duty in the world. We pretend not to wash the little angel of its sins, for we know of no sins, of which its innocent spirit is capable. We reject alike the fantastic Hell from which the ceremony of christening is thought to rescue it, and the fantastic Paradise for which the water and the cross are held to make it fit. To the child we think no special grace is imparted, no particular gain is obtained. The presentation of the infant in our Positive Faith is wholly an act which concerns the parents and the community. It concerns but indirectly the good of the child. It is the parents, the sponsors, the witnesses, the brethren, the thinking and the feeling men and women, to

whom, as in all things positive and rational, the rational use of this ceremony applies. The child is, at most, the better or the worse, by the way in which we seriously accept our duties towards it, and shall in days to come perform the part which with our lips we are met to-day to acknowledge. Let us address ourselves to the bearing of this occasion on the minds and the lives of us grown men and women.

What a type of the individual man and woman is the child — how wonderfully is the life of the infant, in its dependence, in its growth, in its sympathy, and receptivity, the counterpart of the life of the man in relation to Humanity itself. If we need to realise all that we mean when we say that each one of us is the child of Humanity, we should think of the infant and see how utterly *it* is the child of Humanity! If we trace out the infant growing in character and intellect, and think how much it owes to its parents and to the world — we see, as in a glass darkly, all that we each of us owe to the vast Power above us and around us. The infant could not prolong its existence for a day without the constant care of its parents. Every hour almost might cut its life short, were it not watched with loving affection. Every word it learns to utter is the creation of a thousand generations in the race into which it is born; every little habit it forms, every little germ of conscience, every duty it comes to understand, is the fruit of incessant and loving teaching. It comes to catch the tones of the voice, the turn of phrase, the ideas of right and wrong, the gestures, the expression, the standard of life from those whom it finds in its own home existence. Withdraw or relax that care for an hour, make but one mistake in judgment in the matter of food, or clothing, or the like, and the health of the poor child suffers; its very life may be the forfeit. Bring into the home an evil example; undermine its sense of duty, let it grow up in an

atmosphere of coarseness, intemperance, or lying, and that pure and white soul shall be blackened, scarred, and corrupted; and the fair promise of the babe will assuredly end in depravity and shame.

For good or for evil, the child owes all to us. We can fashion it as the potter fashions the clay. The infant is the child of its parents after the flesh; but after the spirit it is the creation of society, the child of us all, of the Humanity that was always before us, and will continue to be after us for ever. And what the child is in its household, dependent on it for life, intelligence, speech, morality, energy, and goodness, that are the men and the women in the world. We think that we help ourselves, provide for ourselves, and teach ourselves. No! it is not so! We are members one of another, and especially members and children of Humanity. The very beggar munching a crust in the street is supporting his life, it may be, on corn that was grown on the sunny slopes of the Pacific, and he soaks his hard crust in the tea which was grown by the labour of Chinese. Follow in the mind's eye the history of a crust of bread or a cup of tea, and you will behold hundreds, nay, thousands, of men and women — white, black, and yellow — labouring to a common end, thinking, providing, combining; the sailor, the shipwright, the dock labourer, the merchant, the banker, the shopkeeper, the baker's workman, down to the hand of the woman or the child which cuts the loaf or brings the cup — all converging by some mysterious fellowship to give the humblest toiler that crust and that tea, and the simplest necessities of life to the toiling masses. It is not only in space and on the surface of our earth that this fellowship of human toil exists. It exists equally in time and through distant ages. The barefoot child in a primary school is at work on the instruments that we owe to the Phœnicians, and Greeks, and

Romans, before the dawn of history, to the Arabs and Indians of remote ages, to the inventions of Gutenberg and Watt, to the long toil in organisation of public life by Cæsars, by monks, and modern reformers. The child is in truth hardly more the creature of the race than the man and the woman. We only see its dependence in more constant and conspicuous ways.

How truly awful that dependence is — when we dwell on the life and future of the child. A dependence it is, at once physical, material, moral, intellectual. How does that marvellous law of heredity, the revival in new and unexpected combinations of the bodily likeness of the child to its parents and its grandparents, to its brothers and sisters, how vividly does this recall to us the succession of the ages. “The child is father of the man,” as the poet says; and just in like degree the man of one generation is the father of the next. We depend upon our past as a race, even as the Future will depend on us and on the Past through us. We parents know (would that we knew it better) how deeply the frame and bodily strength of the child depends on some material conditions which it is in our power to alter or remove. Carelessness in underfeeding or in overfeeding the little helpless body, overcrowding it by day or by night in want of fresh air, wantonly wearing out its little nerves and brain by ill-advised excitement, by premature toil, by irregular hours, forcing it to work beyond its strength, either for the sake of gain at once or for ambitious hopes in the future, may bow down and break the little body for ever. Its health, the bodily basis of all work and thought, depends on the watchfulness and sense of duty in the parents.

And if its body depends on the care of its parents and guardians, how much more does its brain, and its soul, depend on them also! I say it is an awful responsibility. To those

who have long abandoned any sense of a mystical enlightenment of the spirit from on high, of mysterious relation between the individual and a Providence utterly apart from us (and as it were) passing over the head of the multitude of men and women around us in life, — to us, I say, it gives a reality, a precision, a sense of ubiquity to the idea of Providence when we feel the sense of human providence and its action upon the single soul; when we watch how mysteriously the lightest word is heard and remembered by a child's spirit, and fashions it for good or for ill; when we see the young brain and the opening character unfolding itself hour by hour, like a tender bud beneath the sunlight, as each fresh idea or example comes home to it, forming it, expanding it, or sapping its life, nay, it may be, corrupting and poisoning its purity. Every new book is a revelation, every act of self-devotion, or every act of self-indulgence, bends the nature this way or that way. A casual word tends to form a character. A wise training is the making of a sound mind. I can imagine no fabled Hell hereafter to be so powerful in impressing the imagination as the actual and present remorse of the parent who sees his own vices reproduced in his offspring, or tainting for ever the promise of that young life. And so I can suppose no Heaven more real in its intensity than the happiness of the parent who sees that he is shaping that wonderful creation of Humanity — a loving, wise, and useful man or woman.

Nor let us think that it is only on the side of receiving that the child is so precious to Humanity from its cradle. Humanity has much to bestow on the infant; it has much also to hope. It is twice blessed — this little child. It blesses, as the poet says, him that gives, and him that takes. Our Providence, vast and immortal as it is, cannot live, or act, or continue without us. This human Providence is as much

dependent on the children, as any child is dependent on it. Without children it would end with the generation that is. Its great future is dependent on the way in which these children grow up and learn to do their duty, or fail in their duty. The life and the welfare of each little child is thereby not a matter that concerns itself alone; it is not even a matter which concerns its family and friends. It concerns Humanity: It is not the saving of its own soul, that we are thinking of: it is the future of the race which is at stake which will be determined by them, without recall, for ever and ever in ages to come.

To minds saturated with the hopes and fancies of supernatural Salvation, the religious idea on the baptism of a child into Christ's fold, consists in the spectacle of each separate soul in the light of the will of its Creator. The social idea, and the power over it of the race of the men and women into whose society it is born, is worse than neglected and ignored. Human nature is the wrath from which this regenerate infant is saved, it is the desperately evil race out of which it is plucked as a brand from the burning fire. But the social idea is with us the religious idea itself. The religious contemplation of a young soul added to the Host of man leads us in imagination to see it in the light of its vast social possibilities, not only as the subject of Providence to-day, but as the organ of Providence that is to be. Child of Humanity as it is, it is to be a father and a mother of Humanity in the time to come. It may grow up to be one of the noble natures or one of the great brains, which raise Humanity so steadily upward age after age. Any one of these little ones before us to-day may have gifts of heart or head of infinite price to the welfare of our race. The Moses, the Homers, the Aristotles, the St. Pauls, the Shakespeares, and the Descartes, whose images surround us here, each of

those great spirits whose names we cherish as the founders of civilised Humanity, every one of the great and useful servants of Humanity was once, as these little ones are, helpless, unthinking, feeble babes. Nobly did they repay the benefits of mankind to them. Ten thousandfold did they reward the love and care and pains which tended and taught and reared them, all unheeding of the vast future which lay in their cradle undreamed of by them or by any around them.

The end therefore of this our simple meeting to-day is to bring home to us the immensity of that truth, that we are each of us, and especially the child is, at once the creation of Humanity, and the organ of Humanity — the children and the servants at once — giving and receiving in ever-present and mysterious ways that no eye can see, and no imagination can foretell. This Sacrament or Rite, more than any other perhaps, brings our home life into accord with our social life, and reveals to us our family existence, with its trials and its joys, as the type and fraction of the greater existence of our race. The birth of a new child to a household is no personal thing, no mere concern and happiness to the father and the mother. It becomes the concern and the happiness of society at large. The public comes forward and accepts this offering of a new colleague and member; society adopts a new child as its own; it promises to it all the love and care and good which it offers to all; and it demands from it the same services and the duties common to all. All parts in life, in the eye of our Positive Faith are public and social, as well as personal and domestic. Society is deeply concerned in the way in which every part in life is played, down to the lowest and the most trivial. Nor is it a matter of no moment to our fellows, even what we eat or what we drink, whether frugally and soberly, or wastefully and brutally. Our family life has its public side and its public responsibil-

ity; and never more so, than when it presents to the public a new life that is destined to make or to mar such parts of the public as it affects.

And let us remember that it is no petty communion or sect into which the new child is adopted, and within which its life is to pass. It is no Positivist group, no little Newton Hall sect which receives these children, which will watch over them, and which will summon them in time to duty. It is the great public, it is society, mankind, or rather in full it is Humanity itself. There is this about our movement, even in its small beginnings. It is impossible, if we are true to our own belief, it is impossible that we should stiffen and narrow into the ways of *a sect*. Human nature is our creed; human society is our community. We are thinking at this moment of no group of elect and illuminate persons. We are thinking of the public. We present these little ones not to any Positivist Church, not to any special body of believers at all. We present them to the public at large. It is to the service of the public that we dedicate them; it is in the name of the public that we bless and accept their lives. It is neither to make them good Positivists or as some say good Comtists; it is to make them in the widest, and most simple meaning of those words, children and servants of Humanity.

And such is our Positive faith and practice, that nothing which we do or say in honesty and good faith, can alienate from us the rational and the good of any faith. No man doubts the Positive Faith. He may add to it some other belief that we do not share. But every rational man admits that the individual is bound up in Humanity. No man is so sceptical as to deny the reality of Humanity; it is bound up with civilisation itself, and it means nothing else but the human forces which make civilisation. No man again disputes or doubts the reality of the action of the individual on

the race or of the race on the individual. No man denies the responsibility of fatherhood and motherhood. No man denies that it is good to remind ourselves and to teach our children the duties which we owe to our neighbours, to the generations which have gone before, to the generations yet to come.

All this is part of the common opinion of our time. All this is just what good men feel and do without any special theory, and by their sense of right and wrong. But this is Positivism. Positive belief is simply the belief of reasonable men, made systematic on the one hand, and fused with enthusiasm on the other. That religion which men have for ages looked for in the skies is here, is within and around us. The religion of Humanity is the prose that good men and women have talked and acted all their lives. The religion of Humanity is the doing our duty to Humanity with conscious zest and in the spirit of conviction.

And so now let us welcome these young souls whom their parents present to us to-day. Let us acknowledge them as helpmates and fellows that are to be. Let us tell their parents and those sponsors who come to assist their parents in the task, of what infinite moment to the world is the right education of these little ones to become in the future the worthy servants of Humanity. Let us record the assurance of these parents and these sponsors that they will do their duty by these children to that end, in the spirit and the faith of our conviction that the happiness and the duty of each of us are combined in the maxim of "living for others." in the rational and worthy meaning of that term.

You, who present this child, _____, to-day, desiring to dedicate her (him) to a worthy life do acknowledge your

duty to train him (her) so that he (she) may hereafter become a servant of Humanity in thought, heart, and deed?

Answer — We do.

You, who come forward as the sponsors of this child, do acknowledge your willingness to assist its parents in all reasonable ways and to the best of your means in the due fulfilment of that duty?

Answer — We do.

In the name of those present, of our own body, and of the public who are with us in spirit and in work, we accept the professions we have heard, and with hope and good wishes we welcome these children, as young members of our fellowship, in trust that they may prove fitting servants of Humanity in all usefulness and goodness in thought, in heart, and in act.

May Faith in Humanity teach us how to live. May Hope in Humanity strengthen us in need. May zeal for Humanity fill our hearts giving peace within us, and with all men.

X

INITIATION

1889

WE are met together that these young persons here present, in the face of our humble congregation, may be solemnly reminded that a new era in their lives is opening before them, and may publicly promise that they will strive in all things to become acceptable sons and daughters of the great family of mankind.

Hitherto their lives and their education have continued mainly in the home, in the family, under the immediate supervision of their parents. With increasing years comes a larger field of knowledge and reflection; and with wider knowledge, a more systematic education, and a more real sense of public responsibility and the mighty community of Man.

The rite in which we take part to-day is the second in the series of these social consecrations of life. It belongs to that epoch of existence when the young person is passing out of boyhood or girlhood into youth, when the education which has been mainly in the home, as up to the age of fourteen we hold it ought to be, is now passing into the stage of more public, systematic, mature training for the business of life, when the young man, or young woman, is preparing for some definite place in the world.

In one sense this may be thought to answer to Confirmation in the Christian Churches, the first Communion as Catholics call it, when the young person, who at Baptism

was unconsciously represented by its godfathers and godmothers, now being come to years of discretion, openly before the Church ratifies and confirms the promises made at infancy in its name, and undertakes to observe the law of God, and to believe the things which the Church has laid down as necessary for a Christian.

Initiation, as we call this rite, is like *Confirmation*, as it is the earliest public religious profession of the youthful believer; and, like it, it is also the solemn consecration of the teaching which the child has hitherto received in the home, and its public admission to the fuller membership of the congregation, and the religious education in which all share alike. But whilst in the Christian rite of Confirmation the youthful believer is called on to renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of the world, and to believe the articles of the Christian Faith, we are called on to live faithfully and rightly in the world and strive that we may make the best use of all useful knowledge.

All real and solid education is with us a religious education, an education in religion; every true, pure, and useful life is a religious life; and the law of Humanity is the law of right feeling, of unselfishness, of reason and of development in all things earthly — moral, spiritual, and practical — the Law of Love, of Order, of Progress. We will recognise no special education of the Soul, no absolute bar between the spiritual life and the actual life. Let us strive to consecrate education as a whole in all its forms and in all its parts; let us consecrate life here, the practical, industrious, domestic life as much as the meditative life—seeking to make every part of our existence on earth a step in the race that is set before us to run, to form ourselves at last into servants worthy of Humanity.

You are now come to an age when it is but too common to suppose that everything like systematic education is ended, when you have left school, and according to the practice of our day, you may be supposed to give your whole attention to practical work, to business, and the calls of life. Let us ask you rather to believe that all the higher part of your education is but beginning, that you have now to form your minds, whereas hitherto you have been learning only to use the instruments of education.

Whatever be the calls of active life on your time, strive to secure some few hours of the week at least to serious reading and systematic study. It would be a scandal most contrary to all that we endeavour to teach in this Hall, if you who week by week hear the vital obligation enforced on you of a real and complete education for all — for men and for women — for those who toil with their arms as much as for those who toil with their brains — if you, I say, were to fall into the prevalent idea that the primary school has given you education and that when you leave it you are entering on life — on serious production, on manly and womanly careers.

It is not so — or not so yet. Do not think until you come to full age that you are entering on the life of the citizen, on the business of life. Believe rather that your education — your true education — is but beginning. You will have in this place and in other places of education the opportunity of hearing something about the general conclusions of science, the principal epochs of history, the outlines even of philosophy and of moral science, and continual illustration of the profound meanings which lie within the vast conception of our fellowship with Humanity. Seek to know something of history in a rational spirit, that you may understand the difficulties of the present, and the

better comprehend what we hope for the future of Mankind.

There is another source of mental cultivation which is open to you — the study of another language, and as the most easy to acquire and practically the most useful, the study of French. Our French classes here are now a solid and promising part of our system of work. Persevere in the study of French. It is to open a new world for thought and interest when a second language, with its literature, its new point of view, its great books, is brought within our reach. It corrects the exclusive egoism of national pride and concentration.

Again, some training in art should be always included in a real education, and we trust that in the future the rudiments, at least of music and of drawing, may be parts of education as essential as reading and writing. Something of choral singing is now possible to almost all, and we can hardly overstate its mental, moral, and social uses.

In your reading bear in mind the golden rule, that what we all need most to know are the great spirits of the world, the master minds, the great poets, and imaginative teachers in verse or prose — Shakespeare, Milton, Dante, Don Quixote, Robinson Crusoe, Walter Scott; and again in the great sacred books — the Bible, *The Imitation of Christ*, *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, the Catechism of Auguste Comte. Remember that the real value of reading lies in books like these: the great poets, the great religious teachers, the fair, human, pure, and social romances of the immortal times. Remember how sadly short are the hours that in any case you have for reading, and how dangerously prone we are all to waste those hours on the idle, foolish, perishable rubbish which makes up to all of us the substance of what we call our reading. Avoid all wasteful,

idle reading, all waste of time over books which we take up by accident and put down without a trace of feeling that we are the better for taking them up in mind or in spirit.

We who endeavour to teach here have been engaged for some years past on preparing in a convenient size and at a moderate price a handbook of the biographies of all those named in the Positivist Calendar. You have there 558 of the most famous names in all spheres of greatness, and the facts at least of their lives and contributions to Humanity. I am not about to claim any merit for this little compilation; but I will venture to remind you that it contains a summary — a very careful and closely-packed summary of all that we have been trying all these years to teach — as to history, philosophy, science, poetry, art, industry, and religion. If you use it as it is intended to be used, to be studied day by day along with the authorities suggested, it will give you a sort of guide to what we believe is best worth knowing and thinking about — to the names in universal history best worth your reverence, and the books in universal literature best worth reading.

There is also in the Library of Auguste Comte, which Library is to a great extent worked up into this volume of the New Calendar, a very carefully selected list of the great books of the world. Of this Library, too, there is an annotated edition published in this place, giving you easy references to editions, translations, and popular series of reprints. I have never represented this Library of Comte's as an absolute or arbitrary list, out of which it would be a falling from grace to read at all. We sanction no such silly and fanatical dogmatism. Use it as a guide, as a suggestion of what in literature is high, is pure, is nourishing, is abiding — use it with the aids supplied in the volume of the

New Calendar, and you will find it enough to occupy your leisure for a lifetime, enough (if you knew it all) to make you cultivated men and women.

It is the main purpose of the rite which gathers us together to-day to impress upon us all, both those who come here to offer their promises in person and all of us who assist by our presence—the fundamental central lesson of our Human Faith, that the object of all education, of every kind of teaching is—not to force the intellect into predominance, but to make the heart supreme, to warn us that even knowledge itself may be hurtful, if it tend to dry up the feelings, if intellectual vanity grow till it starves within us sympathy, love, self-restraint, and self-devotion. Of the many sides of our belief, summed up in the devices such as we see on these walls, the central rule of all is—Live for Others. The Principle—Love. The purpose of Thought is to guide Action: and Action must be inspired by Affection.

It is in your own homes and amidst your own family that you have hitherto learned to understand this profoundest of all truths—this first and last of human lessons. There you have been taught, and naturally with a vividness, an intimacy, and a tone, which nothing that can be said here in public and amongst strangers can equal or approach—in your homes, and by those most dear to you, you have been hitherto taught this greatest of all lessons—that action must be inspired by affection, and that knowledge is only called in to be the help-mate and pilot of Right Action. The intellect should be the servant of the Heart—not its slave, but its servant. You have already begun to learn, you will henceforth more and more learn, that this life of Affection, which is so natural, so easy, so instinctive in the Home, is really the true life on the wider

field of the world. But it is the Home which is ever the earliest school of the Heart, and will always remain the type and example of a life for others.

Keep your thoughts always truly and nobly occupied. Seek to be loyal, simple, true, and brave — as the Master has said, unbending in principle, but conciliatory in details. Remember that as years go on, you are passing now from the retired haven of the Home into the vast tumultuous world without. Reflect how infinitesimally small in that great world is the life and personality of any one of us, and yet how completely the great life of Humanity itself is made up of the units of the separate lives of each of us, even as the sea is made up of drops of water.

You are no longer children. You are preparing yourselves to be men and women, on whose conduct, for good or for evil, so much must depend for yourselves and those around you. Remember that in sight of the immortal being Humanity your little lives are infinitely small, and yet infinitely precious; that you are but atoms in a mighty world; yet of such atoms the world is made up, its happiness is decided and its future is fixed.

Until lately your lives, whether as boys or girls under the age of fourteen, have not very widely or definitely diverged. You have all alike been brought up within the home, learning the same things, and leading for the most part the same lives — as learners, as school pupils, as the younger ones of the common household, whose business it was to be helpful in the household and docile and affectionate within it. You are all now well past that age, and some of you are already beginning a professional career. From this point a certain divergence between the life of the man and of the woman is inevitable, most certainly in our present state of society. Both men and women we hope may continue at least until full age systematic

education; but for most men who have passed the age of fourteen and upwards their professional training has already begun; and not seldom the exercise of their profession is an absorbing duty.

But for men as for women it is still of paramount importance to use those precious years that intervene between boyhood or girlhood and adult age, in preparing both mind and spirit for the serious business of life. With men in most cases a severe professional training is an inevitable necessity. All the more then is it needful to exhort you to keep in view that grander and more human training which is to fit you to be one day worthy MEN. To you then, for the moment, I first address myself.

I exhort you to remember that you are now entered on a period of preparation and that how you spend that period of preparation will determine your usefulness and credit in life. When manhood has fully begun and the struggle of existence is upon you in all its exhausting demands, when possibly you will have others to maintain and care for, it will be too late for study, for quiet thought, for preparation. You now at least have no others to work for and to be anxious for. Use then these few precious years that intervene in making yourselves fit to be worthy citizens and cultivated men. Be not satisfied with becoming gain-earning machines. Seek to make yourselves wise, honourable, and thoughtful men. If you ever should hereafter have young ones dependent on you, it will make all the difference to your happiness whether or not you can put them in the right way and inspire them with honourable ambition; and it will then be too late to repair the defects of your own education. We know that the time before you is but very much restricted which you can devote to your higher and wider education. All the more then

be careful to use each hour of it well. Live a life of temperance, diligence, purity, and frankness — zealously striving to use these golden days of youth. In a few years you will be citizens with a public career before you. It rests with you now in these short years of interval whether you will be found fit to take up your citizenship as worthy to serve your fellow-men or not. Hitherto you have done nothing but *receive* from parents, from teachers, from Humanity. You are now beginning to *give*, or at least you are beginning to learn how to *give* — to give back something of all you have received.

I turn to address you girls. Until lately you have had the lives, the education of the children of the household. You are now entering on the life, the education of women. All that this means it is especially the task of our Human Faith to make manifest and fulfil. It has laid it down that the highest test of civilisation is to be found in the degree in which the mission of women is understood — and on the other hand, that the highest product of human civilisation is the creation of the true type of Womanhood.

Of the mission of Women — the mission to prepare for which you are now entering — I will speak only in the words of our Master himself.

The key to all that we hold highest in the idea of Family is this: — its part is to cultivate to the highest point the influence of Woman over Man.

The strongly personal character of those instincts to action which are needed to maintain human life on earth, can never be duly purified within us but for the gentle and continuous influence of the loving sex over the affectionate nature of all. As Mother, as Sister, as Wife, as Daughter, nay as servant, the mission

of Woman is to save man from the coarseness to which he is exposed by a life of action and of thought. The greater strength of her affections naturally marks her out for this essential duty; but Society as it progresses, will give it an even higher place in the economy of life, by relieving the loving sex from every anxiety which can interrupt the force of those affections, be it in action or in speculation. This is the real end of the Domestic life. In all its sides the influence of Woman is paramount, in consequence of the greater tendency of her nature towards moral improvement. We are more the sons of our mothers than of our fathers; beyond all brothers is a true sister precious; the love of the wife is usually even deeper than that of the husband; the devotion of the daughter is above that of the son. In whichever side we view it, Woman is the real centre of the Family.

And now a few words more specially to you — the girls.

For all purposes of education nearly all that I have said applies to you as much as to men. If women have a place of their own in life, their intellectual education must be substantially the same to make them the equals of men.

I will now ask you all standing to give the pledge that you offer in the presence of our congregation to-day.

Question. — You do acknowledge the duty enjoined on you by the Faith of Humanity, which has Live for Others as the guiding principle of our earthly lives?

Answer. — We do.

Question. — You will faithfully endeavour in all things to make yourselves worthy servants of Humanity?

Answer. — We do.

On behalf of those present and of this congregation, I accept your assurances so given, and I offer you the help and sympathy of those who like yourselves are striving to live in the same great service. Let us welcome these young persons who, at their own desire and with the consent of their parents, come here to make public profession of their faith and their resolution. Let us look on their act as an earnest of a growing spirit of congregational Union; and let us always be ready to aid them in the course they have chosen.

XI

DESTINATION

1881

WE meet to-day, to offer an earnest farewell to one of our body who is about to return to his public duty in a distant part of the world; and who desires, before he leaves us, to make public profession of our common belief, and to dedicate his active career in the spirit of service to Humanity.

We can understand how one who has learned what strength there comes to a man in a solid system of convictions, and in the consciousness of communion with a body of fellow-believers, should seek before he leaves the society of his English countrymen and friends, to make clear profession of his sympathy with us here, and to carry with him to his arduous official duties there, the sense of the sanction of a religious purpose. We can understand this wish of his, and we can value it. We will endeavour to meet it.

It was the great idea of our master, Auguste Comte, that when the conception of Humanity and of the relation of our lives to the life of Humanity, had attained to its fulness, each of the great acts in the life of each of us should be formally dedicated by a fitting religious expression to the service of Humanity. And thereby, he thought, the social meaning of each serious phase of life would be graven on the mind of each of us, and be constantly kept fresh in the public mind.

A society imbued with a systematic selfishness, or a doc-

trine of individual self-seeking, can easily dispense with professions, which would be nothing to it but unmeaning phrases. But a society which has, as the core of its religious inspiration, the maxim *Live for Others*, will seek on all due occasions to give emphasis and solemnity to the relation of each individual life to the mighty Social Life of which it is a unit and an organ.

Hence it was a striking part of the great Social Vision of the future to which Comte has given form as the Religion of Humanity, that each turning-point in life should be marked by some definite religious act, whereby the person himself would acknowledge the social meaning of the new epoch that was opening for him, and the Community itself might be reminded of the mysterious bonds of Brotherhood which link the individual to the race, our humble daily life to the mighty march of human Progress and Good.

There is no epoch in life more truly crucial than the due selection of a career for the activity. It is no longer our habit to clothe this with any formal act, much less any religious sanction. It would be too often a mockery in the selfishness of our modern scrambling for wealth and power. But the world will be a different place from what it is to-day, when the choice of a profession comes again to be felt as a social office and the right use of one's profession comes again to be recognised as a religious duty.

What is there in all these acts of solemn commemoration of the grand epochs in our lives — what is there, I ask, which is not familiar to the instinctive habits of man from the most distant ages, bound up with the dearest associations of some of the noblest races and times in history, and more or less habitual to our daily practice?

Day by day we see around us formal celebrations of one or other of the momentous hours of life, which the

human race has combined to invest with solemnities of some kind from the dawn of human civilisation.

Well! the enforcing of these epochs in life is what Comte spoke of as sacraments, and which he left to future ages to clothe with the fitting ceremonial.

Mark how from the earliest times till to-day men have concurred in investing the principal epochs in life with a social character, and often with a religious sanction, by means of some public social celebration or formal public ceremonial.

When the young Roman assumed the manly dress and was introduced to the society of men; when the young Christian is confirmed and the Bishop lays hands upon his head; when the young brave is enrolled through public trials in the ranks of the warriors of his tribe, — the thing is the same, the purpose is the same.

When the young heir comes of age and half the county is bidden to the feast; when the apprentice passes into the citizen and enters his guild or trade, — it is the same idea at work.

When a king is crowned or an official is invested with an office; when a priest is consecrated or a judge is called to the Bench; when, of old, the knight was solemnly dedicated to the profession of arms and chivalry; when a soldier is sent to a great command; or, again, when a statesman has reached the age of threescore years and ten; when a great and honoured judge retires from his active career; in all these cases it is the inveterate habit of mankind to commemorate the event by a social expression, which has some tinge always of religious solemnity, and at times and in some ages has had much of religious ceremony.

Under the essentially anti-social and inhuman spirit of most theologies that we know, under the vulgarised

and unsocial spirit of modern anarchy and materialism, these great acts of the drama of life have been stripped of their social dignity and their truly religious meaning. It was not easy for the priests of Monotheism to bless the installation of a judge or a baron; it is not easy for modern competitors for wealth to give a very lofty meaning to the act of entering, or the act of withdrawing from, a layman's public career. And so, for the most part, these momentous epochs in a man's life give occasion in our day for little beyond some vapid or farcical form; platitudes engrossed on vellum in a plated box, a sword of honour, a noisy meeting, or a public dinner at two guineas a head.

Theology and Materialism are alike incapable of making human life truly religious: they have nothing worthy to say to its great moments of the turning-points in its swift race to the eternal goal of all.

The Human Religion consecrates human life in all its phases and in all its stages to the service of the Human Whole, the Providence from which each life receives its force and into which each worthy life is gathered and continued at last.

And thus, these social commemorations of the epochs of man's life are truly *Sacraments*. They are the acts by which our religion gives formal expression to the profound social importance of these individual epochs; the intimate action and reaction of the individual on society, of society on the individual. They are the acts by which our religion consecrates the just and worthy efforts of each separate life, by which the life of the humblest and the weakest is associated for good and for evil, for brain and heart, for hand and will, with the mighty life of the Great Being in whom and by whom we live and work.

We can go back to a far older phase of civilisation. *Sac-*

rament as a word is pure Roman; *Sacrament* as a thing belongs to that heroic republic which has given us the immortal type of patriotism and civic devotion. The *Sacramentum* of the old Roman citizen was the solemn acknowledgment that he made in presence of his comrades and fellow-citizens, when he was called to arms in service of his state; whereby he bound himself to serve her faithfully on the field of battle and to be true to his chief and his duty. Such was the sacrament to the Romans as described by the glorious historian of Rome. And such is *Sacrament* to us, the public profession of the citizen in the peaceful cause of modern industry to be true to the cause of country, to the cause of Western civilisation in its noblest sense, and above all, and in all, to be true to the paramount claims of Humanity. Our Rome is grander, purer, more humane, than the terrible abstraction of the Capitol. But we too — citizen-soldiers of the great city of Mankind — we too can say — We are citizens of no mean city: Let us take heed that we are worthy of her.

In a scheme of belief, which is simple, real, natural, which is nothing but science fused with and transfigured by enthusiasm, a working belief aiming at practical results in everyday affairs, there *can* be nothing mystical about any institution or act. We never imagine that we become a grain better or wiser by performing any act, or making any profession, except so far as the act or profession goes along with a real elevation of the moral nature.

Thus in the exact but rather difficult language of Comte, the ceremonies or acts that may be called sacraments, all worship in fact has a *subjective* value, not an *objective* value. In other words, a man brings nothing away *from* them that he did not bring *to* them, or that he did not gain in spontaneous quickening of his spirit in the very act of the ceremony or worship itself.

And as there can be nothing mystical about these sacraments, so there is nothing of idle ritualism, of scenic form for the sake of form, or mere symbol with nothing real to be symbolised. To us, the form or act is perfectly indifferent and utterly subordinate. The moral and social reality is everything. The moral and social reality is there. We ask only that it shall not be forgotten, that it shall be acknowledged; that all of us, principals and witnesses alike, shall feel it moving in our hearts. But, as no social act is possible in the silent communing of one lonely spirit, and without some visible, overt, and public sign, so we ask only for the least and simplest public sign that shall be adequate to make us all know that the great relation is really present to our minds — the relation of the individual to society, of each one of us to Humanity.

So now, in this business that calls us together to-day, the institution of *Destination* — that is, the religious sanction of the worldly profession or career in life — everything is perfectly simple, natural, and practical. Let us put aside all big words that may only mislead us, and may possibly offend and scandalise those around us. What is it in plain English that we mean? We mean this — the religious and social import of a choice of Profession. The future of the world, after all, depends on the lives that are led by the men and women who make the world. And when a man of mature age has finally determined what shall be his permanent career in life, it were well that he be solemnly reminded by such social celebration as may offer, how closely the future of Humanity is bound up with the practical lives of its children; that he solemnly engages in the face of his fellow-citizens and fellow-believers to act in the spirit of his belief, and in the service of that Humanity whose cause he professes to revere.

Something of this has been seen in one form or other in most epochs of the world; some traces of it linger amongst us still. In all kinds of societies, the entry upon almost every kind of public duty is celebrated by some social proceeding. It is what we call *installation* of the official, the ceremony of which may vary from a beautiful and truly religious institution to an idle repetition of obsolete forms. Under the vast social systems of theocracy, grand or noble modes were spontaneously evolved, whereby the great public functions were surrounded by impressive public acts. The Bible is full of the ceremonies in which judges, kings, and generals were placed upon their seats of office. So too, in the military republics of the ancient world, it was a noble moment when the chief was invested with the symbols of his office, and the blessings of the Gods were invoked to enable him to use them to good purpose.

Of all the institutions of the Middle Ages none have been more impressive, none were more beautiful, than the solemn investiture of the temporal or spiritual ruler, the formal homage of man to man, the installation of the bishop in his see, of the lord in his fee, or again the mystical dedication to the career of arms. There have been few things in the history of feudalism more touching and in one sense more noble, than the combination of lay and spiritual ceremonial, when the knight after years of probation was dedicated to the practice of chivalry and the pursuit of honour.

There, in ideal (an ideal often too cruelly perverted in the real) there was the *Sacrament of Destination*, when the Cid, the Ivanhoe, the Bayard of his age, surrounded by king, knights, squires and churchmen, pledged himself to use his new sword, his knightly belt and his golden spurs, in the constant devotion to Honour and the laws of Chivalry.

Of all these noble instances of dedication or religious installation into a definite career in life, the only ones, as

Comte reminds us, that have survived to our day are in the last two strongholds of theology, the coronation of Kings and the ordination of Priests. These are the only functions left us to-day wherein the assumption of a career in life is formally dedicated by a public ceremony to a great religious purpose. And the thought may remind us how much of dignity and beauty is still preserved to the world exclusively in the shrunken fragments of the old theological world.

But though to-day none but King and Priest are formally dedicated in any religious way to their offices, the germs or vestiges of the same idea exist everywhere. Everywhere we see some attempt to connect the exercise of every office with the social importance of its one exercise, some desire on the part of the fellow-citizens to take public note of the dignity and duty that the holding of it implies. It may take the form of a tavern dinner; it may take the form of a procession of aldermen and the fire-brigade, followed by a lecture from the Lord Chief Justice and a ministerial announcement over a pompous feast; it may take the form of a fulsome address, or be left to the tailor, the upholsterer, and the Court usher.

On all sides there is the instinctive desire of mankind to associate the holding of public functions with the public recognition of its duties, its honours and its social meaning. It is true that, except for the last refuges of theology, the crown and the priesthood, all, or almost all, trace of religious character, has been expurgated from the celebration, which now has often as much to do with gluttony and ostentation as with religion or patriotism. But that is the fault of Theology itself. In the hands of Theology, Religion has been, day by day, disappearing from the world and from our lives, because Theology has been disappearing from the world and from our lives. What have the priests of God to say to the soldier,

and the merchant, and the lawyer, to the carpenter and the miner? They have only to say, "Save your souls and think of Heaven." Theology does not understand modern life, and cannot organise modern industry; and hence modern industry and modern life grow up more and more without religion, alien to religion, defiant of religion.

It is true also that the solemn installation to a career in life has hitherto been reserved for the public offices, for those who exercise power, not for those who live a private life of usefulness. The officers and chiefs of the host alone have received any formal investiture. The private has done his duty with no visible investiture, and without any formal acknowledgment of *his* part in the social welfare.

Both of these wants and failings will be amply provided for in the Faith of Humanity. The religion of Humanity directly busies itself with all things human. "*Nihil humanum a me alienum*" is its glorious motto. Its business is not the saving of souls, but the bettering of men. Heaven is not its goal, its field, its ideal. *Earth is*. Its work, its creed, its hopes, its warnings are (I will not say of the earth — earthy) but of Humanity — Human. It means by religion how to keep men together, how to hold their minds wise and their energies well-balanced. It says that the honourable work of all men in life with a social purpose is religion itself, that the beginning and end of religion is to bring about the best and most honourable work here. Thus we ourselves make the Providence of the world, even in the act of receiving its care. Thus the faith of Humanity will throw itself into all things human and spontaneous in human life, will fuse and colour them with a deep social glow and a solid social conviction. Nothing in life will be common to it; nothing is worldly; Humanity is not too fine to come into the street or too sublime to be busy in the market-place. The special note of the religion of

Humanity will be this. It will be as spontaneous and constant and natural as the breath of our body or the pulse of our blood-vessels. Every right act of human life will be religious; for religion will be no transcendental ecstasy, but the wholesome and orderly disposal of every worthy moment of human life.

The religion of Humanity, therefore, will not reserve itself for kings or priests, nor the holders of public office, or those who have power, place, and command. In the sight of Humanity *every* honourable task performed is a public service; every honest profession is a public office; every honest worker is a public servant. The merchant, the physician, the retail dealer, the artisan, the ploughman, the mariner, the very scavenger and the grave-digger, are men who exercise a function more or less essential to the existence of society, and the due performance of which is a service to society. From the scavenger to the king, society is an organism of subtle sympathies; and religion has its part to ennoble and to dignify every one of the organs by which the common life is sustained.

And, as Religion will enter alike into every public office and function, so it will dignify every honest worker, as the holder of a public function, and to each and all it will offer all the resources it possesses, to impress on the workers of every occupation, the meaning of the work to which they have dedicated their lives, and the social rank that they earn when their work is rightly performed. The religion of the Future will have its word for them all, will consecrate all careers alike, all but the profession of idleness, the career of self-indulgence, the waste that consumes and gives nothing in return. These it will pass by in silent scorn.

Our friend here who comes before us to-day and makes open profession of his belief in this inspiring faith of Humanity

has desired that his public career may be formally dedicated to the service of Humanity; and that, so far as lies with him and with us, he may go to his distant work in the East with a new dignity and meaning imparted to his office. He goes to represent our country officially as Consul in one of the vast cities of Japan. He is not new to the duty. He is returning to his post after some years of service and of trial, and with full understanding of all that it demands.

We cannot be blind to the importance of the duty to which our friend's life is dedicated. In the vast and distant regions of the East, and in dealing with races so far apart from our civilisation and beliefs, the responsibilities which from time to time fall on each single Consular agent of this country can hardly be rated too high. The old representative of Rome in the senate of Carthage cried out — "Here in the fold of my toga I bear Peace or War — which of the two will you have?" — and the modern representative of England in the East has often this crisis to decide by his acts; he holds peace or war, Progress or Anarchy, Right or Wrong, in the fold of his sleeve. We have seen, not once or twice, but often, how a desolating war has been caused or averted by the prompt act of a single unknown Government agent. There are moments in modern history when the future of civilisation itself may be affected by the wisdom, the virtue, or the folly and vanity, of any one of these public officers.

It has been the special care of the Positivist movement to insist on the claims of justice and social morality in these great issues between the white and the coloured races. There is no side of political duty which is so peculiarly the province of the human creed. We feel how wanting, how mischievous, the theological systems become when they have to deal with our Christian Countrymen on the one side, and the heathen Oriental on the other. Theology, Christianity, Protestantism,

seem at those times, creeds that have a mission to widen the difference of skin and to justify the oppression of the weak by the strong. And the restless and selfish temper of modern industrialism, with professions of progress and of friendship through trade hardly less promising than those of the evangelists, too often results in the same end. Our people stay as conquerors where they first came as simple traders and colonists.

The whole spirit of Positivism revolts against this sectarian and national egotism. To the historic consciousness of the human creed, the beliefs of these strange races of Asia and of Africa are *not* vile superstitions and degrading falsehoods, but the survivals of ancient and noble efforts to realise the essence of religious truth. To us their civilisation is *not* contemptible, their worship is *not* ludicrous, their traditions are *not* mockeries, their beliefs are not lies. They are the reflections of one of the great phases through which the human race has passed in its complex development, phases which still retain very much of what we ourselves in the van of progress have lost or forgotten or sacrificed. In India, in China, in Japan, we find remnants of a poetry, an art, a devotion, a justice, a gentleness, a purity, a dignity, a humanity in fact, which we know we cannot always see in the smoke and din of our great cities, in the cheerless cottages of our labourers, in the foul homes of our Irish brothers. We, at least as much as any men, are ready to acknowledge the vast superiority in most things of the West over the East; but we of all men should be prone to remember at what a cost, at what a wanton cost in precious things, that superiority has been purchased.

Towards these Eastern races of primeval civilisations we come then full of sympathy and brotherly admiration. We Westerns have much to teach them, but we have not a little

to learn. We rejoice to see them free from the bitter theological feuds which divide us in the West, from the vile thirst for wealth which vulgarises our Western habits. We earnestly approve their resolution to hold aloof from our Western controversies, and to stave off, if they can, a mere industrial revolution, without other religion but change, without other social aim than the desire to get rich. But it is far more than sympathy and generous study of their past and their present that Positivism offers to the races of the East. It is a systematic policy of International relations, which aims at protecting the weak from the aggressions of the strong. The great maxim of our political action, that political claims shall yield to the claims of morality, always, everywhere, and in all things, that strength, and skill, wealth and numbers can give no title to one race to oppress or displace another: — this great maxim lies at the root of every thought and argument in our whole social programme. We will have neither the Gospel, nor shirtings, nor opium, nor the miscellaneous cargo called civilisation, shot into an ancient and peaceful society at the mouth of the cannon and by iron-clad ships of war. And when our seamen, our soldiers, our traders, and our travellers topple down one unoffending people after another and leave them weltering in the anarchy which is sometimes called Free Trade and sometimes Progress, it is not enough to tell us that it has resulted in cheap tea, or cheap cotton, or a quadruple trade in the gaudiest of printed calicoes and the most worthless of old fire-arms.

The faith of Humanity is wide enough and deep enough to embrace in its sympathy all forms of the substantive religion of mankind, it goes forth to expand all till they become commensurate with human nature, to extirpate and to denounce none. It honours the ancient societies which have not yet entered on the rapid whirl of changes that we call Progress,

and it honours them for hesitating to commit themselves to the course of blind confidence in the future, and blind contempt for their past. It treats a breach of justice, an act of international oppression, as a bar to true progress such that no trade, no steam-engines, no missions can outweigh, though by its means the world were to be filled with cheap cotton, and the surface of the planet were to be covered with cheap newspapers. The West must be just to the East, and the East must know the West; and West and East must meet at length, like the elder and the younger brother in the family of Humanity, and not again as master and slave, oppressor and victim.

You, who are going out to serve your country in this great borderland of the old and the new, you may have to represent your country in one of these great crises, you will certainly represent her to some millions of Orientals in many and important transactions. You will do your duty, we do not fear it, manfully and exactly to your country, to the service to which you belong, to your lawful superiors and chiefs in office. You would ill pretend to serve and obey Humanity, if you are slack in serving or obeying your immediate commanders and superiors. You will do your official duty, we do not doubt, with zeal and courage; but you will do it all the better in that you will have continually before your eyes the sense of that Humanity that has been, that is, that is come, through infinite ages, and in countless races, forming one common life, and weaving together one great destined work.

You will be the stronger when you think daily of that great human Providence, out of which the force and the happiness of individual men is shaped. And you will be the juster, the more patient, and the more far-seeing, when you recall day by day the vast scheme of history, the glorious social future, and noble doctrines of public and of private duty which

Auguste Comte has laid down as the basis and materials of the real religion of Humanity. Your life, more than that of most of us, brings you face to face with the great problems of national duty, through a practical sense of the mighty fellowship of men. Think of these great issues, of these great hopes, as the day begins and as the day ends, and you will be strong, and you will be just; for you will be in the deep sense of a great word — truly humane. Go, and remember that whilst you are in the official hours of your public life the servant of your country, you are still more, in every hour of your public as of your private life, the servant of Humanity.

You will see, as you study the conceptions of Comte and the philosophy and polity of Humanity, you will see more and more the meaning of that striking Oriental civilisation in which your life is to be passed. You will see too, in a way that we do not see, how vast are the issues and how terrible the risks of the old Fetishist and Feudalised world of Japan brought face to face with British and American democracy and commerce.

You will be able to tell the inquiring and thoughtful spirits of Japan that there is a scheme of thought and of practice in Europe which enters with profound sympathy into the purpose of their great teachers, the poetry of their religion, the gentleness of their manners, and the order of their ancient civilisation; which anxiously strives to protect them from violent collision with the adventurous West, and believes that the day is possible, if distant when they shall pass from their simple Fetishism and their primitive Theocracy — not into Christianity and Anarchy — but straight to Order and to Progress in the light of a *Life for others*.

You will tell them how the scheme of the Positivist Church looks forward to a place in its Central Council for the representative of Japan; how the ultimate transition of the Jap-

anese theocracy has been sketched by Comte; how, in the Calendar which he framed, and wherein we daily commemorate the great spirits of all ages, we set apart a day to record the religious and moral teachers of Japan, with Moses, Buddha, Confucius, and Mahomet.

You will tell them of this, of that movement in the West, which does honour to their past, and has sympathy with their life. But we need not look for any great or immediate results. It may well be that the absence even in the best minds of Japan of all that we mean by philosophy, by science, by the continuous history of the past, is such as to make any actual reception of Positivist belief for a long time an impossible — almost an undesirable thing.

But none the less, you will stand in a very real relation to these people, over and above that of your official relation. You are not only there an official representative of your country in the temporal world; but you will be in some sort a missionary of Humanity in the moral and intellectual world. The servant of Humanity is always and everywhere, in one sense, the missionary of Humanity. In your case it must be so in a very special sense. Recognised or not, formulated or not, the fact remains and must remain by virtue of your convictions and of your act of to-day. You go out amongst this interesting and sympathetic people, not only with a public office to fill — but with a moral Mission to serve.

We who are met here to-day are few, and are in no sense a body of persons who can pretend to boast; we have purposely confined our meeting to those who are with us in heart and soul; but — few as we are — we feel that we represent more than ourselves. We know that the spirit which is in us is shared by thousands, perhaps by millions, who do not formally avow it to the world or to themselves. We feel

that our belief does not separate us from the worthy members of any religion, but draws us close in heart to the humane spirits in all. We feel too that our very faith in Humanity gives us a new kinship to every race, and makes us in a sense the citizens of every state, the members of every society. But most of all, we feel that, few as we are, we are living in the Future. We know that a handful may still be the germ of what shall be. We are sponsors, as it were, for those that are to come. And we know that some two or three gathered together may serve to represent myriads who in ages to come shall feel as we do now. And doubtless one day this simple act that we fulfil so meagrely to-day shall be renewed with all the glory of vast assemblies of fellow-believers; with all the aid of art and of enthusiasm, and all the associations which will gather round these beautiful aids to work in life — these incentives and guides to true living.

And few as we are here to-day, perhaps in a time of difficulty and doubt on the other side of the planet, it may support you to reflect that you publicly avowed your belief in a definite body of convictions, and that you professed yourself resolute to carry those convictions into act.

In the spirit of which things, I call upon you now to give the pledge which you offer.

Question. — You do acknowledge the duties which are imposed on you by a belief in the Faith of Humanity?

Answer. — I do.

Question. — You will recognise those duties in your active life in the spirit of a servant of Humanity?

Answer. — I will.

In the name of those present, of our body, and of all who are with us in spirit or deed, I accept and record this profession of purpose; and in their name and in my own I wish

you a long and prosperous career in which this profession of to-day shall be manifest in act for years to come.

May Faith in Humanity teach us how to live. May Hope in Humanity strengthen us in need. May Zeal for Humanity fill our hearts, giving peace within us and with all men.

XII

MARRIAGE

1887

WE are met together to welcome as husband and wife this man and this woman; who, in the face of this congregation, and in ampler form, desire to renew the vows of wedlock which to-day they have made before the representative of the law. It has ever been the custom, both in ancient and in Christian times, for bridegroom and bride to assemble their friends, and solemnly to plight their troth in public. And in all civilised societies the primæval rite of marriage has been held to be an act both civil and religious — regulated, on the one side, by law and the authority of the magistrate, and consecrated, on the other side, by the formal sanction of some spiritual communion.

That twofold aspect of Marriage we most unfeignedly respect. It is well that all who marry should accept such civil rite as is ordained by the law of the land; and also that they who think fit to be content therewith, should be free to act as their conscience directs.

But marriage is a religious, no less than a civil act. It concerns Society, as well as the two persons whom it unites, and the new family which it forms. Whilst it is the most decisive step that we can take in our personal life, it is the foundation of a new life in the Home; and it is the means whereby man and woman take new parts in the social life of the community.

For these reasons — reasons which have been approved in ancient and in modern times — it becomes to us the foremost of those celebrations which we speak of as Sacraments. For ages the Sacrament of Marriage has been the formal pledge taken by the wedded pair, in presence of the congregation wherein they meet for worship, that they will love, serve, and honour each other; and also the Providence which they acknowledge as surrounding their lives.

They who enter into the honourable estate of Matrimony are taking upon themselves not only the solemn duty to be true husband and true wife to each other; but they take upon themselves new duties (no less solemn and even ampler) to the community in which they dwell, and to the great Family of Mankind. In the love, honour, and service which they promise to each other, they are learning to render to Humanity itself love, honour, and service in a larger field. The presence and the sympathy of the congregation in which they meet, consecrates the obligation they take in this momentous epoch of their lives; and, investing their union with public acceptance, it dedicates it anew to the eternal Human Family, even as they dedicate to family affection and mutual help the new Home they are about to form.

Hear what the Master has said about the purpose and meaning of Marriage: —

“Marriage is the simplest and most perfect mode of Man’s social life: the only society we can ever form, where entire identity of interests obtains. It is a union wherein each is necessary to the moral development of the other: the woman surpassing the man in tenderness, even as the man excels the woman in strength.”

“Marriage joins together two beings to the mutual perfecting and service of each other, by a bond which no shadow of rivalry can darken. Its essential purpose is to bring to

completeness the education of the Heart. Attachment, in which it begins, leads on to the spirit of Reverence, and that to the practice of Goodness; each spouse is in turn protector and protected; the one being richer in affection, as the other in force."

Again, he says:—

"Between two beings, even if united by strong mutual affection, no harmony can exist unless one commands and the other obeys. To work out her supremacy in the moral sphere, the woman accepts the just rule of the man in the practical."

"When two beings so complex and yet so different as man and women are united together, the whole of life is hardly long enough for them to know each other fully and to love each other perfectly."

"The marriage bond is the only one in which none can share, and which none can put asunder; and so it outlasts even death itself. For time, which tends to weaken all other domestic ties, does but cement more closely this one—the only human union of which we can say: 'These two shall be one.'"

Lastly, he has said:—

"The moral value of the Domestic Life is this: there is no other means whereby Man's Personal life can be naturally enlarged into a Social life. It is the first stage in our progress to the end of all moral education—a spirit of active goodness towards all Mankind."

In the spirit of these words, and in this human and social understanding of the solemn Institution of Marriage, these two persons present come now to acknowledge their union, as already complete in law; and in the presence of this body they will profess their willingness so to live.

Let them, therefore, standing in the face of this congregation, repeat the words which custom and antiquity have

sanctioned to our ears; words which the Church adopted from the ancients; which, in various forms and from time immemorial, have been used as the symbols of Marriage.

[*Question: to the husband.*]

Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife?

Wilt thou love her, comfort her, hearken to her, honour, and keep her in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all other, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?

[*The husband answers.*]

I will.

[*Question: to the wife.*]

Wilt thou have this man to thy wedded husband?

Wilt thou counsel and obey him, serve, love, honour, and keep him in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all other, keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live?

[*The wife answers.*]

I will.

[*The husband, with his right hand, takes the wife by her right hand, and says, as follows:*]

I, _____, take thee, _____, to my wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part.

[*The wife, with her right hand, takes the husband by his right hand, and says:*]

I, _____, take thee, _____, to my wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part.

[The husband puts the ring on the fourth finger of the wife's left hand, saying:]

With this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship, with all my worldly goods I thee endow.

In the name of those who are wont to meet in this place, and of all elsewhere who share our hopes (the feeble image of the greater Family of Mankind), I offer our welcome to those who to-day have entered into wedlock, and have pledged their troth before the law and before this congregation. We receive them as a new household added to our simple community. May the power of social sympathy add strength to their resolves, and grace to the aspirations of their hearts. May they long abide in mutual help and perfect love, fortifying and inspiring each other in all good things: a support to those around them, and an example to those who come after them.

In the spirit of which things they desire to give their pledge, as follows:—

[Questions to both standing.]

You do now, as husband and wife, profess your desire to live as useful and virtuous citizens in the world, and in all right ways in the faithful Service of Man: that the Home which you are about to form in our midst may be the abode of Love, Industry, and Peace within; the source of good works and just dealing to all your fellow-citizens without?

[Answer by both.]

We do.

[Question to both standing.]

You do also resolve, that if children be born into your household, you will strive so to train them up worthily in the same spirit, that they may hereafter become true children of the Great Family of Mankind?

[*Answer by both.*]

We do.

Of all the institutions of society, that of Marriage is the one which most plainly exhibits the law of progress throughout man's social life. In its primitive form, among the untutored races, it was surrounded by barbarous or fantastic customs, as caprice or selfishness dictated. In its early patriarchal form, as we read of it in the old records of the East, much of that caprice has disappeared; but, though a more human spirit of duty and protection is enforced, the selfishness of the stronger is but too manifest in its laws. In the habits of the Greeks, but far more in their poetry, a purer spirit arises; and the joining of one man with one woman in permanent and equal union is recognised at least in theory and of right. The Romans made a great advance on the moral standard of the Greeks; and the Roman matron has long served the world as a type, at least on the sterner side, of the dignity and duty of the wife. But the practice of the Romans, especially in the days of their decline and in the centre of their empire, very early fell short of their primitive ideal. And nothing made the advent of a new religion more needful and more inevitable than the Roman corruption of marriage, and the degradation of Woman from her true part in human life. The ages of Christendom enormously raised the institution of Marriage, by establishing for the first time a real and true monogamy, and by insisting that Marriage should be practically indissoluble. But the true beauty of the Home was beyond the reach of any Catholic priesthood, as the spiritual mission of Woman was a sealed volume to a Theology of figments. Both Catholic and Protestant rituals have failed to beautify Marriage; and, by the instinct of modern sentiment, they are judged to be to-day behind the age. It is to modern morality, modern poetry, and modern sentiment, that

we appeal to show forth the inner sanctity of Marriage, and to dignify the Wife and the Mother, in all the glory and the power of her mission. Marriage — too long regarded in early times from the point of view of the lord and master, and as a mere source of multiplying the tribe — too long undervalued by the mystical extravagance of theology, as a lower state of life, as a concession to human weakness, as a material necessity of worldly life, which had to be enveloped in supernatural mystery — Marriage has only in our own age been duly understood to be the great social instrument of Religion; the Moral Education of man and of woman; the first link between the Person and Humanity; the stepping-stone from the lower Self to the higher Un-self, or Other-self.

You have heard how Auguste Comte has shown us that the *Home* is the only natural mode by which man's selfish life is purified and elevated into social or unselfish life. And the Wife is the centre of the normal Home — the typical embodiment of the Home influence. Certainly, all men and women are not husbands and wives, just as all homes are not the abode of any married pair. There are noble men who, for excellent reasons, are not husbands; and noble women who are not wives; as there are beautiful homes where there is neither wife nor husband. But the typical centre of the Home is the Wife, as the typical basis of the Home is Marriage. The Home (in the sum) is the universal resting-place of normal man and normal woman; it is the source of our principal moral ideas; nay, it is the source of our real moral knowledge. And Marriage constitutes the Home in its normal and perfect form.

The Home, thus centred in Marriage, is the miniature image of Humanity, as Marriage is the type and prelude of Religion. The Home, of which the married pair are the natural centre, has in its essential features all aspects of the

great human Family of which it is a unit; and all the conditions and elements of Religion begin to be exercised in the married state. Its originating principle is *Love*. Its basis is the *Order* of a true and natural distribution of duties. Its end is the moral *Progress* of husband and wife; she growing stronger by use in the spiritual influence of affection and tenderness, he growing stronger by exercise in the active duty of protection, devotion, and endurance. She yields when he commands; whilst she leads in inspiration and by moral suasion. He leads by force of his superior strength in labour and public activity; he follows, when he is animated by her pure counsels, or moderated by her sympathy and pity. Both gain in true strength — both, in turn and in their due sphere, guiding and following; both, broadening to their true mission; the husband ruling as materially the Master in his own house; the wife guiding as, morally, the Mistress of her Home. As the Roman matron said in their marriage rite: *Ubi tu Caius, ego Caia. Where thou art Master, I too am Mistress.* The symbol this of the Material and the Moral power; Government and Council; the world of Action and the world of Feeling; State and Church.

But in our faith the end of Marriage does not stop there. It is not alone the moral completeness of the married pair; it is the State, Society, Humanity, which is the final aim of the Family. As we are reminded by the inscriptions on these walls, Family is but an element of Country, as that is but an element of Humanity. If the progress of our affections stopped short at Family, the Family itself would develop a deeper collective selfishness. It is a danger which besets all modern societies, and none more sorely than our own. The very end of the Family is perverted, if in love for our family we are estranged from the public. The central maxim of our Faith is — *Live for others.* We learn to *live for others*

best, as we live for our parents, our brothers, and our sisters, after the flesh; then mainly and most deeply as we live for our wives, and in good time for our children and descendants. But to live for our wives or our husbands, for our children or our household, to the exclusion and forgetfulness of all wider duties, is to live for self in a way, less coarse it may be than the life of the mere individual, but perhaps more injurious to society, more widely at war with the spirit of Humanity.

In the history of Marriage as an institution there are two main features which show a continual progress — and to-day there are two great dangers by which the institution is menaced. From the first, Marriage has tended to become more and more exclusive and indissoluble, and the position of wife has more and more tended to that of a moral and spiritual supremacy. Monogamy — the marriage of one man to one woman for ever — has been the slow triumph of ages of civilisation. And even yet, it is far from perfectly observed. The wife who was once but the first of the slaves, and then the mere mother of children, has but lately been recognised as the good genius of the Home. And even yet there are households too many where the ancient savagery remains.

There are two dangers, I have said, which menace the institution, and they both are steps backward in the progress of ages. The growing tendency for facilitating divorce and re-marriage — the very practice which ruined Marriage at Rome — is pressing upon us with the lawless passions of democracy and its claim to be free of all social limitations. And the same democratic passion for equality is madly pressing onward to assimilate the functions of man and woman, and even to annihilate the distinction of sphere between that of the husband and that of the wife.

It is the aim of our Faith, and it has no aim more sacred

and urgent, to resist both these tendencies; to counteract both these social poisons; and to strive, without rest or equivocation, to the further development of the Institution of Marriage — the basis of all Society and the school of all morality — under the same two conditions towards which it has ever been tending. The two conditions are:— the completely exclusive and indissoluble form of Marriage; and the recognising the wife as the Moral Head of the Home.

Where Divorce is common, Marriage is not exclusive, or even permanent; whilst Monogamy itself is degraded to a temporary union at will. The progress towards Divorce is therefore the retrogression towards Polygamy. And the man who, as in some Protestant countries, marries in succession several living wives, never truly has one wife at all. And so, in like manner, the moral Headship of the woman is destroyed where she is urged to grasp the material power of the man, to compete with him in the same sphere.

It will be the mission of our Faith in the future to carry to its furthest limit the *exclusive* and *indissoluble* nature of the Marriage bond. Marriage is the eternal devotion of one man to one woman — a bond in which but they two can enter, and which none can put asunder. It survives death itself. I speak not of possible exceptions under special conditions, of which extreme shortness of married life together on earth is obviously the chief. We ask for no *legal* restrictions upon the re-marriage of those whose marriage has been sundered by death. But, morally and normally, marriage is the union of one man to one woman, for ever, and once for all — it is their union physically, morally, spiritually; in life, and in death; in sight, and in memory; in material society, and in spiritual communion. Were it less than this, it would stop short of becoming the moral education of the Heart and Soul.

It is no part of our duty, as a nascent, rudimentary society,

to impose beforehand on those who come amongst us a formal pledge to this effect. We will leave it to them, in the fulness of married life, to form such a resolution in the ripeness of their own free judgment. Much less is it any part of my duty, who have no sacerdotal pretension whatever, to ask any vow to such end. But it is no less my duty, as the organ and mouthpiece of those who meet here in the faith in Humanity, to assert this sacred, this tremendous obligation, as normally a part of the true obligation of Marriage, as inextricably bound up with all we believe and with all we teach.

And in like manner it is my duty to assert, that the dignity of Marriage is impaired when the moral sphere of the woman is confounded with, or surrendered for, the practical sphere of the man; to appeal to the duty of increasing that dignity and enlarging that moral sphere in every way, and the need of protecting the woman in her indispensable mission. That mission is impaired and ruined by all that impedes the woman in the true duty of the Home; by all which withdraws the Mother or the Wife from the incomparable task of being its real Moral Providence. By engrossing labour, by absence from the Home, be it in toil or in pleasure, by the burden of children too numerous to tend or to train, by the distraction of too many cares, by ambition to shine, by eagerness to gain money, by all that dries up in Woman the fountains of love, joy, and pity, by all that strangles in the Wife her grace, her tenderness, her self-respect, her purity, her refinement; by all that chokes in the Mother her passion for her little ones, her yearning anxiety for their welfare in body and soul; by every coarse word, or selfish act, or sordid thought, of him who is the natural Protector of the Home, the Home is degraded and ruined.

To far brighter and purer ends we would dedicate the married life which begins amongst us to-day. May the

happy auspices with which it opens be ever unclouded and unchanged. May this new Home be a source of Happiness and Goodness within, and a strength and an example without. May the Master of this new Household make it a pattern of Industry, Good Order, and Moral Well-being, in all the acts of a good citizen and a just Head of an honourable Family. May the Mistress of this new Household make it a pattern of Tenderness, Purity, and Devotion, in all the things that belong to true and perfect Wife. And if this Household shall hereafter be blessed with children, may they be trained up in all things that belong to love and goodness; first by their Mother, then by both Parents equally, till at last they be worthy to enter into the training and the Service of Society. Thus we would trust that all the great principles of our Faith may be here expressed and illustrated afresh. May all they of this Household, resting on good Order, inspired by Love, and striving after moral Improvement, be seen for ever to *Live for others*, and, as they *Live openly*, may they live in the spirit of *Order and of Progress* — so that a new and worthy Family may be this day added to our Country; imaging to us all, whilst it realises and prospers in, the great life of Humanity itself.

XIII

BURIAL

1884

At Highgate Cemetery at the Funeral of Mr. Alfred Cutler.

IN THE NAME OF HUMANITY

*Order and Progress. — Live for Others.
Live Openly.*

<i>The Principle</i>	.	.	.	<i>Love.</i>
<i>The Foundation</i>	.	.	.	<i>Order.</i>
<i>The End</i>	.	.	.	<i>Progress.</i>

WE acknowledge that the moving spirit of our lives should be regard for others; for those first of our own household, for those next of our own country, and lastly for the whole race of man. We acknowledge in Humanity the source of the best things that we possess, our protector and comforter when evil things afflict us, the end and object of our lives and hopes. May we who are met together to-day to lay our brother in the dust shape our lives in public and in private by the light of this unceasing Providence.

May the thought of it comfort, guide, and inspire us, may it be about us by day and by night, may it enter into all we do and feel, and may it be present with us in the hour of death.

“Man fadeth away suddenly like the grass; in the morning it is green and groweth, but in the evening it is cut down, dried up, and withered.”

Hear what the great Roman emperor said of old : —

“Every moment think steadfastly as a man; do that thou hast in hand with dignity, with affection, with freedom, with justice; do every act of thy life as if it were the last, laying aside all indifference and unreasonable temper and hypocrisy, all self-love with the portion that belongs to thee; since it is possible thou mayest depart from life this very moment, regulate every act and thought accordingly. If thou workest at that which is before thee, following right reason, seriously, vigorously, calmly, keeping thy spiritual path pure as if thou shouldst be bound to give it back immediately, if thou holdest to this, expecting nothing, fearing nothing, but satisfied with thy present activity according to nature and heroic truth in every word and sound that thou utterest, thou wilt live happily. He who lives a simple, modest, and contented life and turns not aside to the right nor to the left from the way that leads to the end of life, to which a man ought to come pure, tranquil, and ready to depart and without any compulsion, perfectly reconciled to his lot. Do not act as if thou wert going to live ten thousand years; death hangs over thee while thou livest. While it is in thy power be good. Let it make no difference to thee whether thou art cold or warm, if thou art doing thy duty, or whether thou art drowsy or satisfied with sleep, or whether ill-spoken of or praised, or whether dying or doing something else, for it is one of the acts of life this act by which we die. It is sufficient then in this act also to do well what we have in hand.”

My brothers and my sisters! in sorrow, in resignation, in confidence and in hope, we come together to lay in the dust that which is mortal of our dear brother and friend; in-sorrow, for we strive not to uproot from our hearts our personal grief at our loss, nor to stifle the agony of human affection. Death has its agony as birth has and as life itself has, and

we look for no miracle that can quench the tears it causes, but we sorrow for ourselves, not for him; this loss is ours, not his: he has entered into his peace "where all things cease from troubling and the weary are at rest," and therefore we sorrow with resignation, not with a rebellious heart. The common lot belongs to us all and is part and parcel of life and Humanity itself. All things change and we are changed with them; it is only through change that progress is possible. Humanity lives only by the death of her servants, as we live only by decay and renewal of our bodies. But it is not in sorrow and in resignation alone that we commit our departed brother to the earth; it is in sure trust that his work has been done, his part played, and that his best and truest life is yet abiding among us.

"In my father," said the Roman sage whose words we have heard, "I observed mildness of temper and unchangeable resolution in the things that he had determined and no vain glory in those things which men call honours, and a love of labour and perseverance and a readiness to listen to all who had anything to propose for the common weal; but he showed sobriety in all things and firmness and no mean thoughts or actions. There was in him nothing harsh nor implacable nor violent, so he lived and so he died like a soldier at his post waiting the signal which summoned him from life."

We sorrow then in confidence and reverence, for we know that such a life is not lost upon the earth, but that the great Humanity into whose bosom he has entered is the greater and stronger for every good and pure life that is lived.

I say we sorrow not as those who have no hope.

Hope, conviction, and joyful assurance are ours. His life does not end as we leave his mortal body beneath the grass. Imperishable truth assures us that Humanity itself would

cease to be a living reality were it not that the lives of the good and just are transmitted from generation to generation. Those whom he loved and reared, taught and guided, live with us still to love and rear, to teach and to guide those who are to come. Our hearts keep alive the love of those who are gone, they are with us still in our energies and brains. The beasts perish and their offspring know them no more, but the just man does not perish when his body has been laid to rest. The tender words that he spoke ring in our ears more unutterably tender than before; the pure, unselfish nature seems transfigured in our memories like the nature of a saint; the strong resolve and clear will speak to us anew with all the sacred dignity of the tomb; so it is not hope, it is assurance; it is not sorrow, it is happiness, which fill us with sublime confidence that death is swallowed up in victory. We do not hope that our brother will hereafter arise again. We know rather, that he is with us still in our hearts, in our thoughts, in our lives: living a purer, more transcendent life than that which he lived in the flesh, beautified and glorified in our memories, and immortal in that eternal Humanity, the great host of those ever living dead to which he has passed, to live without tiring for ever and ever.

In the words of one who is laid to rest close by this spot, to those words he but the other day listened, when we heard her poem chanted, — so shall he also

Join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence

: : : : :

That better self shall live till human time
Shall fold its eyelids, and the human sky
Be gathered like a scroll

: : : : :

This is life to come
 Which martyred men have made more glorious
 For us to strive to follow

· · · · ·
 · · · · ·

So shall he join the choir invisible
 Whose music is the gladness of the world.

And now since we trust that the soul of our dear brother is gone to join the company of the just we commit his body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, in sure and certain trust in the Humanity he has served, into whose eternal life he has entered at last.

The mourners here sang:—

Calmly, calmly lay him down,
 He hath fought the noble fight;
 He hath battled for the right;
 He hath won the unfading crown.

Memories all too bright for tears
 Crowd around us from the past.
 Faithful toiled he to the last,
 Faithful through unflagging years.

All that makes for human good,
 Freedom, righteousness, and truth,
 Objects of aspiring youth,
 Firm to age he still pursued.

Kind and gentle was his soul,
 Yet it glowed with glorious might,
 Filling clouded minds with light,
 Making wounded spirits whole.

Dying, he can never die!
 To the dust his dust we give;
 In our hearts his heart shall live;
 Moving, guiding, working aye.

XIV
IN MEMORIAM
OMNIUM ANIMARUM

Dec. 31, 1889

As the last grains of sand are running down which record the close of another year — another year in the immeasurable æons that have passed since Time began, another year in the petty span of the life of each one of us — the most busy and the most frivolous snatch an hour from labour or from sport, as they stand on the dividing line of the Old and the New. To-night it is as if, in the noisy movement of the street, some great funeral procession met us, and we saw the dead year itself borne along to be laid in the catacombs of the Past. It would be strange if the Religion of Humanity had not found in an occasion of such universal human interest the source of some of its profoundest lessons. It is so indeed. The organic conception of Humanity invests the last day of the year with a meaning, a solemnity, and with consolation and hopes, above those of any theological conception whatever.

For ten or twelve centuries Christendom has dedicated as festivals to commemorate the departed — All Saints' Day, the 1st of November, for the blessed in Paradise; and All Souls' Day, the 2nd of November, for the spirits of the departed in Purgatory.

The 1st of November was the day, it was said, that, in 608, the Pantheon at Rome was consecrated a Christian

Church. But as the Ecclesiastical year, both in the English and the Roman ritual, begins with Advent, the first Sunday after 30th November, St. Andrew's Day, the special service for All Saints' Day closes the series of Festivals both in the Mass Book and in the Book of Common Prayer. But now that the Civil and the Church Calendar are practically united, and that Law, Custom, and the Church, daily convenience and the rules of the State, all combine to make the year for all purposes alike begin on the 1st of January, the reformed Calendar must obviously bring back the commemoration of the departed to the last day of the last month, which for many purposes is in practice the day in which we look back on the record of the year.

Already custom has consecrated the last day of the year for many ordinary ends; and even the Churches have begun in an irregular and unauthorised way, to hold night services of a miscellaneous kind on this day, though the Church has no official mode of commemorating or using it. It is curious that on a day so obviously marked out for great religious uses as is the last day of the year, so instinctively consecrated by the spontaneous habits of men, both the Roman and the Anglican Churches — having kept their All Saints exactly two months ago — consecrate this day, the 31st of December, to the memory of an obscure Bishop of Rome of the fourth century.

The two festivals of All Saints, as observed in the human and the Catholic systems, afford a fine example of the truth — how our human religion takes up and carries on all the nobler elements of the Christian worship; makes it sane, gives it breadth, practical power, and touching sentiment; makes it historical in place of mystical, calmly strengthening us instead of unnerving us with ecstatic yearnings. Our All Saints' Day is all that the Catholic All Saints ever was or can be: all that and very much more.

The Catholic Church glorified all the Saints who have gained Heaven on the first day, and prayed for all the spirits who were still suffering in Purgatory on the second day. We can include in our blessing all good and useful men who ever lived on earth. The Catholic thinks of them as Angels, exalted to the right hand of the Father. We can think of them as living and working on earth in us. The Christian imagines them incomprehensibly incarnate in the mystical body of Christ. We know them to be, historically and subjectively, present in the visible organism of Humanity.

See how fully, and yet how rationally, the Human religion can adopt all that is enduring and best in the Christian Utopia. The Collect for All Saints' Day runs in the Anglican Prayer-Book thus:—

O Almighty God, who has knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Christ our Lord; Grant us grace so to follow thy Blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys which thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

May we not widen and enlarge these words? Cannot we see (not the elect only) but all men and women who have lived a useful life knit together in one communion and fellowship in Humanity? Cannot we aspire to grace so to follow the noble dead in all virtuous living that we may come (not to unspeakable joys) but to take our part in the mighty movement of mankind? Cannot we too adopt the substance of that Gospel of the day, the substance of the Sermon on the Mount? "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merci-

ful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart. Blessed are the peacemakers. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake."

This day which is called All Saints' or All Souls' Day in the Catholic Ritual, and The Day of all the Dead in the Positivist, is in no peculiar sense associated with Death, or only in one side of which I will presently speak. In substance and in the main, it is not the Festival of Death. It is the Festival of those who live in the Past. Those whom we would honour on this day are not more dead than are all those whom we commemorate on the 364 other days of the year. All calendars, Christian or other, all centenaries, anniversaries, and holidays of all kinds, refer more or less to those whom we no longer see: Lady Day, Good Friday, St. Stephen's Day, St. Paul's Day or St. Peter's; in our own calendar the seasons of St. Paul, Dante, Shakespeare, Descartes, and the rest; the centenary of the French Revolution, or of the Armada, or the Declaration of American Independence — all holidays relate to those who have entered into Humanity, and to great events, deeds, thoughts, or works of those whom Humanity has taken into itself. All calendars, and all days of all calendars, and all commemorations of historic persons or events, alike relate to those who are no longer our contemporaries. And this day reminds us of the incalculable host of all servants of Humanity alike, the roll of whose service is closed, and whose work lies henceforth in memory and in sympathy alone.

Our calendar is designed to remind us of all types of the teachers, leaders, and makers of our race; of the many modes in which the servants of Humanity have fulfilled their service. The prophets, the religious teachers, the founders of creeds, of nations, and systems of life; the poets, the thinkers, the artists, kings, warriors, statesmen, and rulers; the inventors,

the men of science and of all useful arts. All of them are departed from our sight; and it is their departure itself which has given them their power over us. Every day in the Positivist year is in one sense a day of the Dead; for it recalls to us some mighty teacher or leader who is no longer on earth.

But when we think of them we do not specially recall the fact of their death. That is an incident of no other moment than that it is the condition of their power. But on the festival of Shakespeare, or Milton, or Walter Scott, we do not mourn for their death, we do not commemorate them as dying, but as living. We do not mourn over Shakespeare, Milton, or Scott; over Cromwell, Frederick, or Washington. We honour them; we rejoice with them; we give glory to the Humanity which produced them, and which they served with such abiding power and such far-reaching genius.

But the 364 days of the year's calendar have left one great place unfilled. They have honoured every type of genius, power, industry, courage — every faculty which has ever made men illustrious in the eyes of men. But they have not honoured the heroic patience, the love, the devotion, the goodness and the sagacity which has won no glory in the eyes of the world, but which has made up the rank and file of Humanity. Those myriad spirits of the Forgotten Dead, whom no man can number, whose very names were unknown to those around them in life, the fathers and the mothers, the husbands and the wives, the brothers and the sisters, the sturdy workers and the fearless soldiers in the mighty host of civilisation — shall we pass them by? Love, tenderness, self-devotion, endurance, beating in hearts more numerous than the drops in the ocean — worth more in a sense, if we could weigh love against genius, than the imagination of Shakespeare or the heroic will of Cromwell.

All the genius and the heroism of the mighty ones we love to honour would be dust and ashes and sounding brass, were it not for the infinite range of those homely toilers by whom Humanity exists. It is these whom to-night we recall — all those who have lived a life of usefulness in their generation, though they tugged as slaves at the lowest bank of oars in the galley of life, though they were cast unnoticed into the common grave of the outcast — all whose lives have helped, and not hindered, the progress of Humanity — we recall them all to-night, and not the elect, or the blessed, or the beloved of the Lord. *All good men and all good women!* And when one reflects on what that means, we may well think that this outweighs the memories of all the other days in the year.

We will give them such honour as we can. It seems a scanty place to set apart for them — these infinite myriads — in the whole course of the year — this one last day. But it is impossible to honour the nameless by name; and it would be idle to repeat our gratitude to those whom we cannot describe. They asked no more in life. They sought no fame. They craved for no reward. It was their happiness and their pride to do their duty without name or prize.

There is a noble fitness that those who lived not for self but for others, should be honoured, not by themselves, but with a great host like to them. But the same truth holds of the nameless as of the illustrious dead. We commemorate them not as dead, but as living. We do not mourn for them. We recall all that they have done, all that they are doing; we express our gratitude for what they have given us, and we reverence the Great Being, of which they form part, and which they have helped to create.

We are not here to mourn, or to meditate like a monk in his cell on the melancholy aspects of Death. We are here

to recognise the nobler aspects of Death, the social necessity of Death, the glory and the peace it brings on its sable wings. Death has its painful aspect as Birth has, as Life has, as Age, and infirmity, and labour have their painful aspects. But the Dead are simply one element of Humanity, the most numerous; that is, they are Humanity itself, apart from the living generations, and the unborn yet to come. When we honour the Dead, meditate on the Dead, submit to the Dead, we are honouring and submitting to the far larger part of Humanity itself, the only part that we entirely know, the only part whose work is done and whose service is not capable of abatement. If there were no Dead there would be no progress; Humanity would settle into a Caste system; and if fresh generations were produced at all, they would be held in swaddling clothes by the preponderating force of ancestral routine.

The death of one generation is the birth of another generation. If every generation perpetually survived, the new generations could not be free. With death all that is not abiding and fruitful sinks into oblivion. The good and the true survives and is continued. There can be no civil war with the Dead, or but for a time. The younger ones of one generation can defy, or insult, or conflict with the elder of their own contemporaries. But they cannot wage conflict with the Dead. The influence of the Past is ever greater and greater; and all the more as knowledge and truth extend. There could be no Past if there were no Dead. For death is but one phase of the mighty law which runs through the whole organic world — the law of inevitable and unceasing Evolution.

This is *our* Heaven! Here are they who have gone before; knit together in one fellowship and one communion. These are our blessed and honoured ones — made one with the

living Being of Humanity itself. May we have grace to follow them in all virtuous and humane living, so that we may one day join them in the vast uprising into a higher civilisation on earth! It is a Heaven not confined to the elect. It is a Heaven without a Purgatory and without a Hell. It is a Heaven, or, more truly, an earthly Future on a nobler plane, to which all good men, all good women, children, slaves, outcasts, contribute and share, in which even the merely useful or the moderately virtuous share, provided their evil deeds do not positively outweigh their better deeds.

It is a Future from which none are excluded but the utterly vicious or pernicious; which is divested of all cruel terrors, and accompanied by no lingering expiations. Those who have done evil — rest in peace. The worst that awaits them is this: that over their graves men say, They indeed are dead. Oblivion, annihilation, eternal Night and Silence in very deed do await them. These only are the really Dead.

There is one side, and one side alone, whereon the thoughts of this day must recall to us the cruel aspect of Death. Necessary, inevitable, universal, and even blessed as is Death when regarded as part of the evolution of Humanity, it is cruel enough in the particular, for the time, for the individual, for the family. Birth also, though it be a joy, and a condition of life, is cruel too. And not all the belief that her infant is another Shakespeare or a Cromwell born into the world, can soften one pang in the mother's agony. Death — which is the condition of all progress to Humanity, through which only can the servants of Humanity rise to their highest dignity and power — Death comes with a stunning blow on the bereaved household and the sorrowing friends. It would be worse than idle to attempt to mitigate this horror by fantastic promises or fine words, or to seek to bedizen and disguise the sharpest agonies which human nature knows.

Some of us here, only a few hours ago, stood in our glorious Abbey, the most sacred spot in England, and saw the body of one whom we have known and loved for a generation laid in that thrice consecrated dust.¹ Few men have had more friends, fewer enemies, more devoted admirers. It seems but the other day that we held his generous hand, heard his hearty laugh, and revelled in the light of his genius and his humanity. It was a burial, as the poet says, so noble, "that kings for such a tomb would wish to die." Yet it could not stifle the grief of the son who had lost his father, and the sister who had lost her brother, and the many friends who had lost their friend. No! though Death might seem to be robbed of his terrors by such sympathy in a whole nation, and such a perfect crown to a long life of glory and of goodness. It was not so. And to hundreds there the hot tears swelled into their eyes as they thought, not of glory or of honour, but of the good man whom they would see no more.

How much more, then, when Death comes down with all its appalling weight on the private household, where it cuts off, it may be prematurely, one most necessary, most beloved, most wrapped round in the love of family, and without whom the family seems unable to live. It would be a mockery to pretend that when death comes thus, it is not a calamity under which the reason itself seems to reel. But only for the time. It is but two short weeks since many of us here stood beside the husband, the sons, the brothers and sisters, and the many friends of one who was dearly loved and widely known amongst us — one whose mortal remains we committed to our mother earth in grief, resignation, and loving remembrance. It could not be but that on this day we should think in a special sense on a loss so recent and so deeply affecting us all — on a calamity so entirely irreparable to one whom

¹ Robert Browning, buried in Westminster Abbey, 31st December, 1889.

we so greatly honour here, to the husband who survives the wife.

Our thoughts about the meanings of this day, and our tributes of honour to the great ones of the past and the countless host of the unknown ones whereof Humanity is formed, must be deeply tinged by the near and personal sorrow which touches our own heart — sorrow that, in a yet keener way, pierces the hearts of those who are so close to us. It would be idle, it would be inhuman, to pretend that this close and intimate pang can be absorbed at once in the wider and distant hope of Humanity. Such is the law of human nature. The one close tie touches us always more deeply than a thousand ties to the remote. We love the feeblest infant of our own begetting more dearly than the noblest character of our own age or of all the ages past. The disappearance of the friend whose hand we can no longer grasp pains us far more than the disappearance of the greatest statesman or poet. It is so; and it is indeed well for us that it is so. For we learn to love Humanity in the large only by first learning to love our own in the Home.

But this personal pang for what we love is not, in all its intensity, perpetual. Time consecrates it, ennobles it, transfigures it. Slowly, but surely, the grander social influences of the personal calamity grow more plain and dominant. Humanity, in all its power, reflects back on our home desolation the higher uses of the great law of life. We learn to see in death the condition of all social progress, the real glorification of Humanity, as we come to learn how death itself may deepen, raise, and ennoble our own life. The memory of those we lose is no mere reminiscence. It transfigures to each of us the lost one. Never in life did they seem to us so tender, so pure, so steadfast, so wise; never was it in life so sweet to accept guidance, help, and consolation from them,

as now that the voice of the loved one is heard only from out the silent depths of memory.

What a profanation it seems to doubt or to reject the warning word that comes to us now only in imagination! How do we reflect a thousand times that we have never half known all that we have lost! How do we now see deeper and sweeter meaning in all that is meant by Home, and Family, by Friendship, and by Love! Now, indeed, we know that those who have gone before us are risen into — a Heaven, shall we say? that word has been associated with a mass of fantastic incomprehensibilities — risen, rather, into a purer world, the world where the souls of the just become incorporate in the living action of Humanity.

Now we know them to be — not Angels, for that word has been given to unintelligible monstrosities — but men and women transfigured by the halo which dignifies the Past and all who dwell therein. This is the true future life. This is the real immortality. No good life dies or can die. The body dies. But the life, the activity, the love, the care, the teaching of every worthy man or woman must live in its effect in those whom their influence has touched, in the husband or the wife, the child, the brother, the friend, who survive — even in the unknown stranger who in any degree has been made stronger, better, happier, by their aid. This is what, in a visionary way, the great founder of Christianity saw as in a glass darkly. Since by man came death, by man came also the transfiguration of the dead. As in Adam all die, even so in Humanity shall all continue to live. This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. Thus, in a real and certain sense, Death is swallowed up in Humanity. The victory is with Humanity, which has taken us up into herself for ever.

XV

DAY OF HUMANITY

1887

1 Moses, 99.

1 January, 1887.

As we meet again on the New Year, we must take note of the fact that we are now in the thirtieth year since the death of Auguste Comte; in the fortieth year since he first publicly taught the belief, now known throughout the world as the Religion of Humanity. At his death, in 1857, his books were but little known; Positivism had no organised existence outside of his own study walls; it was not a factor in the religious, social, political, and intellectual life of the age. To-day it is. It holds the field. It grows, lives, and visibly acts. Churchmen, politicians, reformers, even the serene race of philosophers, have to reckon with it. It meets them face to face. Organised communities of Positivists in many places, in many countries, both of Europe and America, are living in what no one can deny to be a social and religious communion.

But not to set too much store by the organised communities, what, I think, is far more really important, is this:— The movements of the day find Positivist ideas in the field, calling for a settlement. The preachers say: “How can we answer this claim of a religion of human duty?” — “How can we get rid of this certain promise of a life after death, here on earth, and in the lives of the good and the loving and the brave who survive?” The social reformers say: “Why do these

Positivists, who certainly are not afraid of new opinions, decline to join in the claim for a new position for women, for revising the institution of Marriage, for making every man, woman, and child, each his own law, his own Church, and his own State?" The Socialists say: "How can men who feel, as deeply as we do, the horrors of our industrial chaos, who look for the future of Industry in the complete redemption of the worker, how can they decline to join us in destroying the appropriation of wealth, if need be, by force?" And the politicians say: "How can men who care for politics so keenly, and who specially abhor doctrinaire formulas in politics, decline, as these men do, to follow their party? how can they upset all party discipline by insisting on right and wrong, justice to the weaker races, and show indifference to the manifest destiny of this great Empire?" And so the philosophers say, or think, if they do not say: "Till we can show a coherent synthesis of all Natural Science, in one plane with an explanation of History, and a working scheme of Human Society, — till we can show men how Science supplies a true substitute for Theology, — so long as there is no other complete Synthesis extant but that of Comte, — so long as there is no living social community on a purely human basis but the Positivist, so long shall we have to wait before we displace Comte."

How comes it, I ask, that thirty years after the death of an obscure teacher of mathematics in Paris, this is what we see — that he is a powerful factor in the religious, social, political, and intellectual life of our age? It is not so with other famous teachers in this century. Fichte, Hegel, Schelling, Cousin, Hamilton, Robert Owen, Coleridge, Carlyle, Mill, and others were eminent thinkers, impressed their age, taught something more or less like a system and founded something more or less like a school. These, and like power-

ful minds, have passed away, without leaving behind them an organic mass of living ideas, which grow, develop, and work themselves bigger and stronger into the life of succeeding generations. Why has Auguste Comte, alone of the eminent teachers of our century, done this?

The question is not very hard to answer. Auguste Comte was not a man of letters, the mere author of a philosophy, the founder of a crude school or sect. Sects, schools, philosophies, in these days hardly last a generation. What Comte did was to found a mighty fruit-giving idea — to launch a new method — to hold up a new ideal of life. There was no finality, nothing sectarian, or doctrinaire about his work. It was a method — working like the Baconian method in prepared ground. It was to show men a more excellent way, as once the Gospel did. It was an idea, the idea of Humanity, of boundless scope and force — like the ideas of Republic, or of Equality, or Fraternity, or the following of Christ, but an idea far more solid and powerful.

Hence this idea has gone on working and enlarging in forms not specially conceived by Comte himself. It has a myriad applications and consequences. The various communities we see to-day were not formed by Comte. They have spontaneously sprung out of the actual situation. Positivists are not repeating formulas or practising artificial rites. They bring a potent method and a mighty conception to bear upon the questions of the day, and the wants and interests of men. This conception gives to these questions light and life. It clears the air; brings men together, and makes them feel of one thought and one heart with each other, and with the growing forces of their age.

How vain are the criticisms and prophecies with which Comte's teaching was met years ago! Cut and dried systems! arid formulas! fantastic rites! they used to say. Where is

there anything fantastic, obscurantist, cut and dried here? There is nothing like a *sect* here. We repudiate the very name of Comtists; assuredly we do not swallow all Comte's voluminous writings in the bulk. Four times in these last years, on the anniversary of his death, thirty years ago, four of us, one after the other, have tried to sum up and explain the meaning of his teaching, the value of his life. Four times the speaker has said that Comte's life is in no sense perfect, not at all to us an object of worship or imitation, that it is the soul and essence of his teaching which binds us together, and not a servile acceptance of his words, or a lifeless caricature of his Utopia. Comte was a poet and an idealist, as well as a philosopher, and we are not going to turn his poetry into formulas, and his ideals into a Pharisaical Targum.

I make bold to say, that our Positivism does assist us in bringing good sense to bear on public affairs, and in being beforehand somewhat with public opinion. What, since the death of Comte, have been the practical questions on which in England his followers have striven to apply his principles? It is now not far from thirty years ago, since some of us insisted that the great work of our time was the raising the condition of labour; and as a means to that end we most strenuously justified combinations of workmen, then proscribed by an unjust law. It was in 1859 that Dr. Congreve, in the name of our faith, writing to the organised Trades of London, said:—

The Religion of Humanity, and herein it differs from Christianity, deals directly with social questions. It is applicable to all, but it considers as the most urgent of all, the following:—How are the working classes to be made, in the fullest sense of the term, citizens; how are they to be incorporated into the existing social order, so as to have their due share of its benefits?

That question Positivists have asked unceasingly for

thirty years. I need not remind you of all that was done and said in this matter by Professor Beesly, Mr. H. Crompton, and so many others of our friends. Well! the unjust combination laws are swept away; the language of the capitalist class, of the public, is altered. No man in England, whatever is done in Ireland, pretends to breathe one word against the lawfulness, the social usefulness of combinations; and on a thousand platforms politicians of every school are repeating that the working men must become "*citizens*, in the fullest sense of the term," as Dr. Congreve said. It is the A B C of politics. Were we right or wrong, when, thirty years ago, in the name of Humanity, the Positivists, alone amongst the Churches, and the Philosophers, stood shoulder to shoulder by the workmen? ¹

Forty years ago, Comte denounced the old hidebound metaphysical dogmas of the older Economists, in their un-social assertion of the absolute rights of Wealth and the blessed word Competition. From that time, in the measure of our forces, his followers have sought to replace this mischievous old Plutonomy by a new and humane Social Economy. Were we right or wrong? Where now are the old Plutonomists? — skulking in learned societies like an exterminated and inferior race of aborigines.

Forty years ago Comte said, and we have repeated in season and out of season, "The true work of Religion is the education of the People." Were we right or wrong? who denies it? who does not offer at least good wishes in that cause? Forty years ago he said, and we have continually insisted, that Socialism was a potent and growing force, and had behind it a profound human and just claim, and that if Society could not find some better answer than "May I not do what I

¹ It will be remembered that this was spoken in 1887, exactly twenty years ago.

please with mine own?”, Socialism would strangle Society, and turn Order into Anarchy. Were we right or wrong? Is not Socialism in our midst? Has it not a question to put that will be answered? and is not Society somewhat anxiously fumbling for its answer?

The mere conception of a Religion of Humanity, with its sanctions in human duty, struck the knell of the Religion of Heaven and Hell. What do we now hear about Seraphic Bliss and Eternal Torment? Where now are Heaven and Hell as the bases of religious life? Both have floated away into the cloudland above or below. I do not say the spirit of the Gospel is extinct, of the Sermon on the Mount, or the letters of Paul; and I for one trust it may never be extinct. But Heaven and Hell have receded into the background, and are no longer the centre of the Christian life. Here in England we said, nearly thirty years ago, that a refurbishing of the Christian scheme of redemption was an idle pretext for disclaiming Christianity. What has become of the Broad Church now? The flower of the Broad Churchmen are now preaching Humanity, though they think they can get on without dogmas at all. And that beautiful hope of ours — how life does truly survive death — is it not penetrating our literature, inspiring our poetry, and passing insensibly into the current language of the day?

Or in the region of philosophy, is there any scheme for the Classification of the Sciences which has in forty years superseded Comte's scheme? Is any other accepted, used, even known? How many persons can even repeat correctly Mr. Herbert Spencer's rival Classification of the Sciences — and I know of no other? Sixty years ago Comte propounded the conception of laws in social evolution. It was then an idea wholly new in human thought. This idea of Sociology is now one of the grand axioms of Philosophy. Sociology,

Social laws, Social Statics, Social Dynamics, Social evolution, Social organism, Environment, Social functions, Synthesis, Subjective life — these are all terms due to Comte, the ideas are his, the words are his, and the application of them is his. What would modern philosophy be without these terms and these ideas? They form the ground-plan of modern philosophy. Or again, is there any living evolution of History known but that of Comte? I know of none; I never heard of any.

And that idea of Evolution, now the watchword of all progressive philosophy, is itself due to Comte. Comte is undoubtedly the first who ever showed a uniform and continuous evolution, *as the law of being of the physical and the social world alike*; and no limited idea of Evolution is worth much. The Religion of Humanity is simply the Evolution of Man — idealised and revealed.

Turn to practical politics. It is now exactly thirty years since Dr. Congreve, in the lifetime and at the suggestion of Comte, put forward his memorable plea for morality and humanity as the basis of the Foreign Policy of England. I cite Dr. Congreve again, as the oldest and earliest of the English followers of Comte. From that day to this we have cried aloud to our countrymen to respect international morality; in books, in pamphlets, in placards, in addresses, in speeches, in sermons, on platforms, and in pulpits, in newspapers, and in meetings, in the press, and in society. In India, China, Japan, Afghanistan, Burmah, New Zealand, Jamaica, in Zululand, in the Transvaal, in Abyssinia, in Egypt, in the Soudan, we have urged the claims of morality and peace, against aggression and Empire.

Were we right or wrong? Have we spoken in vain to the conscience of Englishmen? I think not. The cause has in practice been betrayed; but the principle of international

duty, international morality, is at least acknowledged by the conscience of our time. Anti-aggression is morally in the ascendant. It has become the watchword of a great party, the cognisance of the greatest living party chief; it has overturned governments, and made new departures in our political history. Anti-aggression is the new Radical platform: it is only the party phase of International Morality.¹ The motto on the title of our combined volume on "International Policy," twenty years ago, was this sentence from Comte: "*The fundamental doctrine of modern social life is the subordination of Politics to Morals.*"

Lastly, on the Irish question, which we have seen give us three ministries — ought I to say four? — within a few months, which is become the grand crucial problem of our generation. Twenty years ago, Positivists, alone amongst English parties and schools, put forward the claim for Irish nationality. We formed an Ireland Society; we petitioned Parliament on behalf of convicted Nationalists; we asked, in the words of Dr. Congreve, that Ireland should be created "a new self-ruling unit."² For twenty years we have held the same language. We stand alone no longer. What we uttered here and there, as best we could, has now become the platform of the main Liberal Party, the hope to which the enlightened part of our whole people look. Were we right or wrong? Were we the mere Utopists, pedants, fanatics which we have been called so long and so often? No! we were simply in advance of the opinion of our countrymen.

Such are some of the fields where Positivism has shown itself eminently in the spirit of the age, and manifestly big with fertile ideas. And for this reason I say it holds the field; it has to be reckoned with; it is, as Comte said, good sense

¹ Viz. in 1880 and 1906.

² Viz. in 1867.

systematised. These things are not the fruits of formulas, pedantry, sham creeds, and hollow systems. By their fruits you shall know them. Men do not gather grapes of thistles, or social force from whimsical mummeries. And if, in politics, in economics, in philosophy, in religion, in so many causes, and through so many questions, we find that Positivists thirty and forty years ago propounded those principles which are now in the ascendant, and proclaimed those duties which are now recognised by the conscience of the best part of the English public, we may be sure of two things: — First, that we have not listened to a vain tale, nor are, as the preachers tell us, playing with religion, with formulas, abstractions, and shams, secondly, that in dealing with Comte's teaching freely, we are truly assimilating it and not being enslaved by it, and are losing nothing vital in it, because we decline to use Comte's books as Calvinists use their Bible.

Confident in this conviction that Positivism holds the field between the Revelation of the Gospel and mere Knownothingism, let us go on quietly working out our own faith in practice and in conduct. The year has been more than usually fertile in the denunciations and refutations of the theological churches. The strict Evangelicals and the Ultramontane Catholics are now joining in the discussion. Sermons, books, and tracts are launched at us with more than usual earnestness of late. For my part I read none of them, and I advise you not to read them either. They are almost all, from the nature of the case, futile and worthless. Nothing in the world can be more vapid than the smart exercises of some promising pupil of the Jesuits, or elaborate syllogisms to prove that Humanity is not the mysterious God of the Thirty-nine Articles. These Evangelicals and Jesuits do not know what Religion really is. They are familiar with The-

ology only in its decline and disease. We take Religion to be a habit of life, equally applying to every incident of life, as Homer, Æschylus, Pythagoras, and Confucius, understood Religion.

Our work as a body has been carried on here during the year with some new features; I may fairly say with unabated activity. Our Sunday evening meetings have been continued regularly, except during the summer months, with the aid of several members of our body who had not before spoken from this platform, and who are a great addition to our staff of teachers. Mr. Descours has conducted a class for the study of French; and another class has been regularly studying Comte's *General View of Positivism*. Besides the Sunday meetings, we have met as usual on New Year's Day, on the last day of the year, and on the anniversary of Comte's death. Our annual gathering in the afternoon of that day to visit the tombs and the monuments of great Englishmen in Westminster Abbey, the social meeting in our hall, and especially the discourse on the life and work of Comte, attained this year an increased importance.

Our special commemorations have been the centenary of the death of Frederick the Great and the musical commemoration of the earlier Masters of Music. There is something fresh, and in some senses noteworthy, in each of these. Our body is perhaps the only organised group of men outside the German people who have made any attempt to do honour to the memory of the greatest of modern statesmen, and to show sympathy with the German people in their devotion to their national hero. We are certainly the only group with Republican and popular sympathies which has done so. And the relative and truly historical judgment which Positivism cultivates was never better set forth than in the fine address that Professor Beesly sent to the Burgo-

master of Berlin, wherein he so well showed how men devoted to the cause of peace, industry, public opinion, and the social republic of the future, can genuinely honour the last of the great kings, the first of the new sociocratic chiefs.

About our musical Commemoration of the older Masters there was this too of special, as there was in our celebration of Mozart, Beethoven, and Handel in previous years: it was much more than concert, it was more than lecture, it was no conventional commemoration. The combination of music, choral enthusiasm, congregational reverence, heightened, explained, and dignified by a discourse at once religious and poetic, is a new type in Art, a new type in Worship, a new type in Education. It is the fusion of the sense of Knowledge, Reverence, and Beauty in a new form and to unfamiliar uses. The performers become no longer players in a concert hall; the music is no longer a mere source of pleasure and an object of criticism; and the biography of the artist is no longer an extract from a dictionary. The singers hold the place of the chorus in some ancient sacred festival; the speaker holds the place of priest; the whole is Worship, in the broad, old, true sense of that word. From such things we may imagine much in the future.

A new feature in our Sunday meetings this year has been the regular practice of choral singing. We all owe much to those who, at great personal sacrifice and with such unwearyed perseverance, have maintained a trained choir to lead the hymns and anthems. No one who has not had personal experience of it can imagine the difficulties of regularly maintaining a choir under conditions such as ours, and the amount of personal effort it implies in the members who persevere. The difficulties of a choir are proverbial; they have proved too much for many a congregation. I trust they will not prove too much for ours. Fresh volunteers are urgently needed,

if the work is to be carried on. And I must earnestly call on all our friends who meet in our hall to give us or to procure us practical assistance. Efficient teaching in choral singing is here offered gratuitously to any one who cares to join in our work. Let us show that the cause we have at heart can enable us to rise superior to the petty indolences and self-indulgences, the little jealousies, piques, and fastidiousness which we know to be the usual obstacles in the way of amateur musical societies. The world is full of them; and it will be full so long as mere amusement, mere distinction, mere art is the end in view. All Positivists, as Mr. Lushington well said on 5th September, ought to sing. But our choral singing here should be much more than a refined amusement. It is the outward and visible sign of our union and hope. It is the eminently social Art; the art which is especially the instrument and ally of human religion.

Art of any kind, like all human work, perhaps more than any human work, requires constant training, unremitting labour in practice. Of all things, slovenly art is the least excusable and the least agreeable. Rough, untrained work in things useful is often a necessity; and, as far as it is honest work at all, serves some purpose or other. But crude, ungainly art serves no purpose except to vulgarise those who endure it and those who practise it. Clumsy, careless art is anti-social in any form; but in the worship of Humanity it is intolerable. It corresponds to profanity in theological systems. When a dull, lifeless congregation are content with the least musical of hymns "to the praise and glory of God," or prefer, it may be, to leave congregational singing to the crude noises of ignorant children, their Father in Heaven they trust will take the will for the deed, and will tolerate discord for the piety of their purpose. We have no such consolation. No unseen Power hears our hymns. They are

meant only to raise the hearts of those who sing and those who hear them. And if we sing them ill, without care, or art, or self-respect, we are only degrading our taste, and dishonouring the name which we profane.

In this matter we have everything yet to do. I am myself very deeply convinced that the time has come when we need for ourselves and for others a more and more definite expression of religious emotion, some more systematic type of worship than any we yet have. We have never for a moment believed that we could rest satisfied with simple lectures as a sufficient embodiment of religious emotion. If there be real religion, there must be congregational emotion; and if there be this, it must become systematic and take orderly expression and form. There is, I hold, deep meaning in the popular instinct that the test of a really religious communion amongst men is that it rouses in them the desire for the visible expression of common religious feeling.

The public are right in that; and our own hearts respond, I believe, to that instinct. I would invite the attention of our body to that most urgent want. The more we reflect, the more we are convinced that the forms and motives of the worship of Christ are alien to the religion of Humanity. To bow the knee to a supposed all-seeing God, to invoke His personal attention to ourselves, to prostrate our spirit before the throne of an offended judge, like the condemned prisoners of a rebel city (and such is the essence of Christian worship), all this is wholly alien to the purpose of men and women who come together, as we do, to learn, to teach, to kindle in our hearts the sense of our social duties. For these reasons, the rites and ceremonies, the collects and the psalms daily rehearsed in church and chapel are less capable of assimilation and adaptation by Positivism, than are the social ceremonies of the old Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans.

This Christian, or rather Protestant, idea of Prayer — the communion of soul between the worshipper and an Infinite and Absolute Creator — is a mere brief episode in the history of Religion. The normal idea of worship is an artistic social ceremonial, deepening the sense of moral duty. There are some who think that the future of Religion is a matter of individual self-culture only, — the maximum of individuation and spiritual self-communion, — that religious development will follow the rule of “go-as-you-please.” It cannot be. If religion mean anything it means union, communion, discipline. Union of hearts and thoughts involves community of expression and purpose, and common resolution is only trained into a habit by regular and organised practice in common. Religion implies a congregation, a congregation implies worship, worship implies order.

But if the order of Christian worship is wholly inapplicable to us, what remains? Art — and especially the Art of Music — is the essential instrument whereby the Religion of the Future must embody its worship. Worship, not in the sense of prostration and invocation, but in the true old sense of the education of the heart in reverence, sympathy, and duty. The key to the problem of worship is the artistic education of the heart to beat in unison with intellectual conviction and practical energy.

Not that I would limit worship to Art, much less to any given Art. Our practice of pilgrimages, for instance, is another form, into which Art does not directly enter. What we mean by pilgrimages, what we can get of good from them, has been so lately described in Mr. Hember’s admirable address, that I need say no more. The past summer has given us a great extension of this most beautiful institution. Besides our visits to the graves of Milton, Bunyan, Fox, Penn, De Foe, and the other great Puritans; and again to the

graves of Newton, Handel, Spenser, Cromwell, William III., in the Abbey, and, finally to that of Auguste Comte in Paris, we introduced the new feature of visits to the Parthenon marbles in the British Museum, to the cartoons of Raffaele, and to the pictures of Murillo and others in the Dulwich Gallery. On every one of these occasions appropriate addresses were given.

These visits of ours were not a mere holiday excursion, though often, I think, a delightful holiday to all. They were not a mere lecture on pictures, statues, places, and men. They were no mechanical and superstitious prostration on the spots or the tombs consecrated by great and awful memories. They were at once a beautiful religious observance, a source of mental education, and a genial and social festival. When we looked at pictures, or statues, or tombs, it was in no idle or critical spirit. It was at once to enjoy, to reverence, and to learn; to fill our souls with the beautiful, but also to fill our understanding with knowledge of how the beautiful contributes to civilisation; so that a thing of beauty is not only a joy for ever, as the poet said, "a possession for ever," as the Greek orator said, but an education in wisdom and in goodness.

Our pilgrimage to Paris was the most complete and systematic that we have yet undertaken. It has been so well described by Mr. Bockett that I need say but little about it. Here it was not merely a gallery, a work of art, the resting-place of great men, the sites of great events, that we gathered to see. It was all this, and much more. It was a brother people, the great sister capital to London, our own chief and his friends; the grave, the home, the books and familiar household things of the founder of Positivism. No one who took part in it can doubt the value of such an experience. I can see no reason why it

should not be frequently repeated, and indeed become an annual occasion.

But this, like all other associated efforts, requires personal sacrifice and a willingness to give up one's individual ease, freedom, or money, for a common object. One cannot speak too warmly of the degree to which this personal sacrifice is carried by so many of our members and friends. Those who are responsible for the organisation, perhaps, best know how much effort is lavished on our community. But there is a considerable body of persons, sufficiently interested in our work, and quite alive to the advantages they may derive from our society, who give us nothing. They give us neither money, nor help, nor sympathy, hardly indeed good-will. Newton Hall is, doubtless, first and foremost, a Free School. As on the hospitals it is written, "Supported by voluntary contributions," so on our notices it is said, "All meetings and lectures free." I know not if there be any other institutions in the country, beside the Positivist, where education, addresses, courses in science, in history, in languages, in art, in music, lectures, concerts, and the rest are offered freely to all who come. No questions are asked, no collection is made, no seats are reserved. We are making the new and crucial experiment of trying if those who benefit by the work of this place will not of their free will contribute enough in money or time to support it. But such an experiment, new as it is, ought not to be abused.

An age such as ours, when men are growing justly anxious as to the very bases of common morality, compels us reflect what Positivism has to say thereon — I mean on domestic, conjugal, and sexual morality — and Positivism, we all know, has very much to say. The strength of Catholicism, the first special note of the Gospel, that

by which it dominated mighty intelligences, such as those of Paul, Augustine, and Aquinas—the strength of the Gospel lay, and always has lain, in its passionate ideal of personal purity. The thought of the pure, All-seeing Eye, to whom the inmost secrets of the heart lay bare, this was the great lever which transformed civilisation from Paganism into Christianity. And at every age when the consciousness of this All-seeing Eye has been rudely shaken, the hold of the public mind on purity has been visibly weakened.

By common consent it is visibly weakened now. And this lays on all those who are forced by science, by philosophy, even by public morality, to abandon the conception of the All-seeing Eye as the basis of duty—it lays on them a profound responsibility to show that morality itself is not weakened, because its base is made larger and more real. It is perhaps the greatest responsibility which weighs on all who seek a new way of life. So that all who publicly profess a religion of Humanity are in a special way bound to show that Humanity can inspire a life at least as pure as ever did the Gospel of Christ. I have little misgiving that it can inspire a purity as great; one far less hysterical, more natural, more general, more truly rational, and therefore more stable. But the duty of proving it in action lies as heavily on us as ever it did on any body of men and women who ventured to differ from the religion of the day.

With very much that is said thereon by the Churches we heartily agree. We are wholly at one with them in their special warning that an individual morality by self-culture only can never guarantee general purity; that the passions, and of all passions the violent sexual passion, can be held in check, at least for the majority of mankind, by nothing but the sense of an External Power dominating our lives,

to whom every act and thought is equally to be referred. The recent biography of a great poet, the author of *Hellas*, *Prometheus*, and *Adonais*, has just been teaching us what a wreck may be made of the home; how discord, degradation, suicide, are the portion of those who, with sublime aspirations, stand defiant of all External Religion as a discipline. Another poet, happily still with us, has been quitting the region of lyric, where he is supreme, for the region of homily, where he is quite ordinary, in order to warn us that scientific Agnosticism will ultimately end in profligacy. The Positivists have very much of the same fear. It is one of our main objections against dry, scientific Agnosticism, that it possesses no adequate basis for morality.

Morality, both public and private, can never be stable without an External Providence, irresistible in force, and claiming at once every act and thought. No Christian preacher has ever insisted on this more earnestly than Comte; nor has any Christian philosopher fortified it with such overwhelming proofs. The Christian Providence once melted away, there remains, there can remain, no other than the Human Providence. When the Christian dogmas are disappearing, the one safety of morality lies in the conception of Humanity as the disposer of our individual lives, the source at once of personal and of social duty.

Positivism will assuredly do nothing to relax, it will very much increase the moral duty of sexual purity. It stands alone, perhaps, in all the schools of social reformers, in striving not to loosen, but to strengthen, the bonds of the institution of Marriage. Marriage in its most sacred, most pure, most indissoluble form, is to the Positivist the foundation of society and of duty. Catholicism itself, in its fiercest epoch of asceticism, never sought to exalt the sanctity of the marriage union above all physical passion,

in ways so bold and thorough, as did Comte. He struck at that which is indeed the key of the whole question — the control of sexual love, within the institution of Marriage itself — by appeals which in boldness and stringency have never been attained by monk or moralist. Yes! continence, whether within or without the marriage bond, continence in all its forms, in the habitual control of every appetite, and especially of the wildest and most disturbing of all the appetites, continence on personal, on domestic, on social grounds, is at least as deeply impressed on the servant of Humanity as ever it has been by priests on the servants of Christ. And I venture to maintain that it is impressed by ordinances and with incentives more real, more large, and far more stable, than ever were given from pulpit or confessional.

Last year, as more than once before, I tried to draw serious attention to the recent progress of Socialism in England. Perhaps this year, in returning to the subject, our warning may be met with less incredulity. The least careless observer will hardly now deny that there is a new and growing movement towards Socialism, Communism, and even Anarchism, here, as there is in Europe and America.¹ For a whole generation Positivists have insisted that the accepted economic basis of our modern industrial life was an utterly rotten basis, and they have pointed to Socialism as the inevitable result of it. We have never accepted Socialism as a satisfactory answer to the problem; but we have continually urged that Socialism presented a claim to which as yet Society had no real answer.

We have always insisted that the claim of wealth to do what it pleased with its own, was false in science, anti-social in spirit, and one to which the people never would, and

¹ Spoken in 1887.

never ought to submit. We too maintain that all wealth has its source in Society, and that in the disposal of all wealth the interest and the sanction of Society are paramount. To all that the Socialists and Communists urge in their passionate attacks on industrial selfishness, we have always given most hearty sympathy, reinforcing their passion with calm and unanswerable proofs on solid economic and social science. Those who listened to the striking addresses lately given us by Mr. Overton and by Mr. Bockett, know how deeply Positivism is in sympathy with at least the critical side of the nobler forms of Socialism. When Socialists of the type of Mr. Henry George or of Karl Marx strive to prove that the land of a country, or the machinery and factories, are all by rights the property of society, not of individuals, and should all be administered in the name of society, and for the benefit of society, our only objection to these theories is, that they do not go half far enough, and are but half-hearted views of Communism.

Why stop short at land, railways, machinery, and factories? All products whatever, movable or immovable, lands, houses, furniture, food, even clothes and tools — the very workman's hammer, his boots and his shirt — are all equally products of society, and should all be enjoyed or used in the name of society, and to the benefit of society. To this position, capable of irrefragable proof, the official plutonomy of the rich has no sort of answer. It is Positivists who profess the only complete consistent, and practicable Socialism; they are the only Socialists who are not afraid of their own doctrines; for even the noisiest anarchist at an open-air meeting thinks he has a right of property in his own boots and his own shirt, to say nothing of his own tongue. And no school of Communists whatever has known how to deal with intellectual products, the forces

of the poet, the thinker, the teacher, the politician. Comte, alone of reformers, has said, "The products and the faculties of men of every sort are all equally due to society, and all alike must submit to due social control."

Ere long Society, betrayed by the old hide-bound Plutonomy into a hopeless and inhuman contest with Labour, where it has no moral support and no confidence in its own selfish dogmas, will turn with eagerness to the Positive solution, as its only chance of saving either Order or Property. The Positive solution, if it be in one sense socialist, more truly socialist than the wildest communism extant, is the only Socialism which cares for Order as much as for Progress, for the Past as much as for the Future, for the Family and the Individual as much as for Society, and for Humanity as a whole even more than for Individual, Family, Country, or Society. Positivism can guarantee the institution of Property, but only on condition that Property shall become social in spirit and in fact. Positivists mean what they say. It is a moral control only that they would apply to wealth or to power, a control without disorder, tyranny, or violence — but it is a real control; a control far more searching, continuous, and minute in its operation than the control of any communistic phalanstery could be. For it will be a control exerted over the heart, the thoughts, the very character of every man who even for a time is the depositary and trustee of social wealth and force — a control maintained by the organised mass of a regenerated social opinion.

The great question of our time, the question which has within a year transformed the whole face of English politics — the burning question of Ireland — appeals to Positivists on two sides at once: first, as a great social and economic problem, perhaps the most acute and complex of the century;

and, secondly, as a striking example of the evils of international oppression. Economic justice and international justice are the two oldest and earliest questions to which Positivists in England publicly addressed themselves. And Ireland presents us an economic and an international problem at once, inextricably mixed and combined. I say an economic and an international problem at once; for we at least, for a generation, have steadily insisted that no economic solution of the problem could succeed which left international oppression untouched; and that no national solution of the problem could be satisfactory, which left economic evils in their present state. Positivists have always, in a word, maintained, as they maintain still, that it was essential to relieve first the misery of the Irish peasant, and then to satisfy the national sentiment of the Irish people, and not the one without the other.

Thus all that has happened in the last few years,¹ and in the last twelve months, has certainly not taken us unprepared, or come upon us as on men who had not their minds made up. In this matter we occupy the position of the Abolitionist party in the Northern States of America during their great Civil War. The Abolitionist party for a generation preached to their countrymen the immediate, unconditional, and complete emancipation of the negroes, as a matter of social, economic, moral duty — as the sole guarantee for a united nation — as a question of religion. The arguments of Lloyd Garrison, of John Brown, and of Wendell Phillips were as strong in 1843, or in 1853, as they were in 1863. But events brought home their arguments to the minds of their countrymen by successive and at last by sudden and startling steps. It needed a great war and the convulsion of the nation to establish their

¹ Spoken in 1887.

principles in the mind of the majority. Great events, as yet happily far less acute than those in the United States, have brought over to our view of the Irish question great masses of our countrymen, powerful parties, and illustrious statesmen. But we ask still, as we asked twenty years ago, for immediate, complete, unconditional emancipation of the Irish labourer from his cruel lot, and the pacification of the Irish people by restoring to them a national government.

Let me recall for a moment how long, and how constant, has been the struggle made by the Positivist body on behalf of the Irish cause. The letters of Dr. Bridges to the *Bradford Review*, letters republished in the course of last year, and which received so warm a reception from Mr. Gladstone, were first published in 1867, just twenty years ago. In the spring of that same year 1867, Mr. John Bright presented to the House of Commons the petition of our body on behalf of the Irish prisoners, wherein we said, "The actual government of Ireland is the government of the conquered by the conqueror," and we there called for the abolition of the Irish State Church and a complete revision of the Land Laws, and we pointed to the fact that as the Irish nation was unable to make its wishes adequately felt by the stronger nation to which it is bound, the Fenian rebellion was a natural result.

It was in the following year that Dr. Congreve published his work on Ireland, which ended with the formula, "Small states and not large, local not imperial action, true permanence in the relations of life, and not orderly or disorderly displacement," as the conditions of the future settlement of Ireland. And at the same time we sought to found the Ireland Society, of which the main objects were the abolition of the Irish Protestant Establishment, and "a settle-

ment of the land question in harmony with the feelings of the Irish people, the object being to replace the nation in possession of its land, by converting into proprietors the actual cultivators, whether large or small." These were our principles long before Mr. Gladstone or his party had taken up the first of the Irish measures. To these principles we adhere to-day; calmly and hopefully watching and waiting for the time when the whole English nation may be brought over by events to this view.

With regard to the measure or measures of last year little enough need be said. They are ancient history, and will probably not be again revived in that particular form. But in any case, there is no reason to expect a uniform judgment of Positivists on that or on any other matter of practical politics. It would be entirely to misconceive the Positivist doctrine to suppose that it assumed to furnish men with solutions about practical measures, or that it was likely to make men think absolutely alike on any practical measure whatever. Nay more, Positivism has sides of its social theory profoundly conservative as well as radically progressive, and there will consequently be both Conservatives and Radicals, for the present at least, in the Positivist body. For this reason, no absolute agreement is likely to be found within it for the Bills of any government whatever, and I do not know that any such agreement is desirable. It is no part of my province to-day to enter into criticism or apology of the schemes of the late Government for the better government of Ireland. For my own part, I have said long ago, and I still maintain, that whilst a firm and stable executive is needed for Ireland from the national point of view, that executive will be stronger and better if it be framed rather on the American and Presidential type, than on the British Parliamentary type.

Still less can it be any part of my province to enter to-day on the deplorable and heart-rending condition of Ireland, or the alarming incidents of the present crisis. We have, some of us, had long experience of fierce and complicated contests between the capitalist and the labourer in many another field, and we have always most carefully abstained from pledging ourselves to the tactics of either side in any particular economic dispute. I speak not for others — I speak for myself — when I say that it makes one uneasy to see the obscure and sinister law of conspiracy brought out again into an economic struggle, when we can remember how it has been abused by the capitalist class, and how invariably its use has recoiled on those who appealed to it. Speaking at least for myself, I feel pretty confident that, in England, no judges will venture again to place the law of conspiracy at the service of the capitalist class in a Labour dispute. I am quite aware that the text of the law places a large, an almost indefinite discretion in the hands of the court. But, in England, that discretion will not I think be again exerted in favour of a class.

There are few markets or trades where what are technically illegal conspiracies are not committed daily with impunity. Labour disputes are unfortunately still the one subject where the English people cannot trust the impartiality of judges. A persistence in the partisan attitude which they have so often shown in economic questions will rapidly lead under democratic institutions to that last worst evil of democracy — an elective magistracy. It seems certain that a large body of Irish peasants are unable to pay the full nominal rent. It seems equally certain that a section of the landlords in Ireland are abusing the letter of their rights by exacting the full nominal rent at the cost of eviction. It is on these men, and not on the miserable

inmates of mud cabins, that the weight of social pressure and the arm of a just law ought in equity to fall. And so, I understand, Mr. Matthew Arnold has been saying. For my part, I wholly reject the plea that landlord and tenant in Ireland stand on the equal footing of merchants concluding a contract on 'Change, or that the peasant whose rent has been arbitrarily forced up by a landlord's agent, on the sole ground that the peasant has himself improved his holding by the sweat of himself and his children, is in any reasonable sense of the term a man who has made a contract at all. It may be the letter of the bond; but it is not social equity, and assuredly it is not humanity.

But I am full of confidence that the long agony of Ireland is approaching its close. Each step towards justice made by our statesmen, even if baffled and abortive at the moment, stirs and works in the national conscience. The cause which, twenty years ago, we upheld almost alone amongst the organised groups of English politicians, is now the cause of nearly one-half of the people of these islands. The uncertain, vacillating policy of governments, the confusion and indiscipline of parties, the distracted counsels and shrill alarms of the oppressor class, the complications of our whole imperial situation, fill us with hope. The emancipation of Ireland is perhaps even nearer than we dream. The policy of international oppression has circled our empire round with difficulties and dangers. India, Burmah, South Africa, Egypt, are still enlarging the perils, so often foretold and forewarned, of a system of aggression and international crime. We are entering on a year full, as it seems, of peril and foreboding to us and to all men, the direct results of which no man can foresee. If but one of these perils pass into the desperate stage — the emancipation of Ireland is secured for ever.

XVI

NEWTON HALL

1886

POSITIVIST COMMITTEE

Report for the Year 1885

Since much misunderstanding still exists as to the actual working of the Positivist community, in spite of the entire publicity of everything said or done by that body, it seems right to include the operative part of one of their early Annual Reports, omitting only business details, balance sheets, and statements of accounts.

Order and Progress. — Live for Others.

Live Openly.

<i>The Principle</i>	<i>Love.</i>
<i>The Foundation</i>	<i>Order.</i>
<i>The End</i>	<i>Progress.</i>

*Between Man and the World, we find Humanity.
Know, in order to foresee, and hence to provide.
Act from Affection; and think, in order to act.*

THE past year has shown a still further extension of the threefold purpose for which Newton Hall was originally opened in May 1881; that purpose combining religious communion, systematic education, political and social action.

The work which for twenty-eight years has been carried on in Paris and elsewhere in France by M. Pierre Laffitte, the actual Director of Positivism, has been continued during the past year with unabated energy. He has maintained the regular commemorations, together with some others, occasional and new, and the social institutions to which Comte gave the name of sacraments. M. Laffitte has also been able to organise, not only in Paris, but in some other places in France, a system of free and popular teaching in science and philosophy.

As work of the same kind is being on many sides attempted, both in England and in France, we would urge emphatically on all who desire to take part in it, how essential for this end is a real union amongst the whole body of Positivist Groups, wherever situated; and how important it is to avoid any sectarian spirit in those groups. The only possible means of permanent cohesion, it appears to us, is to be found in the spontaneous aggregation of those groups round the centre, directed by the friend and disciple of Auguste Comte in Paris. To give to Positivism a national character, or, what is worse, a local character, would be, we believe, in direct contradiction to the express language of Comte, no less than to the entire spirit of his teaching and practice.

I. On the first day of the past year we met, as usual, to commemorate Humanity, and to review our relations and our duties towards it. On the 5th of September, the day of Comte's death twenty-eight years ago, we held the commemoration of that anniversary in Newton Hall. This included an address by Mr. Beesly; a Pilgrimage to Westminster Abbey; a dinner, at which many of our friends from the country were present; and a social gathering, with music. On the 31st of December we commemorated the Day of All

the Dead, by an address given by Mr. J. Cotter Morison, and appropriate musical pieces.

On the 19th of December we held a musical commemoration of Handel, like those which we had given before for Mozart and Beethoven. Mr. Vernon Lushington gave a discourse on the life and work of the great musician; and Mr. M'Naught volunteered his valuable services, and those of many of his friends, in performing several of the vocal and instrumental works of the master. These occasions, in which the performance of some of these immortal works is combined with the expression of religious emotion, afford, it seems to us, some foretaste of new modes which the future may open to sacred art.

We have also carried out this year another series of commemorations, long familiar to our friends in France, which are a real creation of Positivist belief. These are the Pilgrimages or religious visits to the scenes which are sacred to us as containing the tombs of some of our great men, their homes, or the spots where they lived and worked. It is a revival of a noble mediæval and Oriental practice; but in this case, without any trace of fictitious sanctity, and entirely in accordance with historic and scientific reality. These Pilgrimages combined a meeting in the spots associated with great men, and suitable discourses on their lives and work.

These excursions included a visit to Chalfont St. Giles, to the house where John Milton wrote *Paradise Regained*; and to Jordan's the first Meeting-House of the Society of Friends, with the grave of William Penn. Another was to Highgate, to see the house built by Oliver Cromwell for his daughter; to the grave of John Harrison, the inventor of the modern chronometer, in Hampstead Churchyard. A third excursion was made to Windsor, which is associated with so many names in English literature and history.

The Pilgrimage to Stratford-on-Avon, which took place on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd of August (17, 18, 19, Dante), was the most systematic excursion that we have attempted. Nearly eighty persons of all ages and both sexes took part in it. Visits were made to the birthplace, the house, and the tomb, of William Shakespeare; as well as to the reputed house of Anne Hathaway, and other spots in the neighbourhood associated with his memory. The party were most hospitably welcomed by the Mayor of Stratford. Mr. Vernon Lushington gave a discourse on "The Life and Times of Shakespeare" (now published). And in the evening a musical commemoration of the poet was held, by the performance of many of his songs and poems, both as solos and part-songs.

On the 5th of September, the anniversary of the death of Auguste Comte, we made a collective visit to Westminster Abbey. The Abbey, with its precincts, is associated in a special way, with English history and literature. Seven of those whose names are in the Positivist Calendar were buried in the Abbey, and it contains monuments erected to the memory of five others. It seemed to us appropriate that, on the day when our friends in Paris are visiting the tombs of Comte and of his disciples and friends in *Père la Chaise*, we should visit the venerable Abbey, which is associated with so many great men in our own country.

Our Sunday meetings have been continued regularly throughout the year except during the four summer months, when this portion of our general work was suspended. The character of our meetings has remained, as it has done since the formation of our Committee, devoid of formal ritual. It consists in addresses intended to awaken our sense of general dependence on Humanity, and our duties towards Humanity in all their forms, and to supply us with a knowledge

of the general laws of its being, in order that we may be able to serve its advancement better. These meetings and addresses have had a religious character, in that they are intended to deepen our understanding of human nature in general, of personal and social duty, and to kindle the spirit of devotion to our human duty. But we have not sought to give them the character of adoration by way of set formularies, nor do we speak of them as services in any special sense.

Our Sunday discourses have dealt with the history of the past, the public and social duties of citizens, and the philosophical and religious truths on which the harmony of personal and social life depends.

The following is a list of the various series of Discourses given on the Sunday evenings:—

MR. J. COTTER MORISON —

Social Duty (Four Discourses).

The Cultivation of Human Nature (Four Discourses).

MR. J. OLIPHANT — *Charity and Charities.*

MR. FREDERIC HARRISON —

Industrial Reorganisation (Six Lectures).

The Future of Women (Two Lectures).

Duties of Positivists (Two Lectures).

MR. HENRY ELLIS —

International Morality (Four Lectures).

DR. T. FITZPATRICK —

On the Nature of Life (Two Lectures).

DR. BRIDGES — *Love, Faith, Hope* (Three Sermons).

Bichat.

DR. KAINES — *The Higher Life* (Three Discourses).

PROFESSOR BEESLY —

Positivism and Party Politics (Two Lectures).

Altogether there have been thirty-six discourses in the course of the year, by eight different lecturers.

II. In the second place, we have endeavoured to continue the popular free school for teaching the elements of the leading sciences. In January, and the following months, Mr. Lock continued his class on "The History of the Natural Sciences."

During October, November, and December, Mr. Charles Higginson gave a course of twelve Lectures on "The Sciences: What they are, and how they grew." This very important and remarkable course, which was followed by a regular and attentive audience, is the first effort to show the seven sciences, mathematical, physical, biological, and moral, in the light of their historical connection and practical interdependence. It is an evidence of the resources which are opened to education by Comte's theory of the encyclopædic treatment of all law, both natural and human, as well as an earnest of the mode in which such an education may assume practical form.

We have also continued the classes for singing, under the direction of Mr. Shore. The cost of the singing-class has been a gift to our body, and does not enter into the accounts. A small choir is now in course of training.

On the second Monday in each month the Hall has been opened for social meetings, at which music, both vocal and instrumental, has been given, and these gatherings have served to bring together those who are in the habit of attending in the Hall.

The following Positivist works have been published in the year:—

DR. J. H. BRIDGES — *Three Lectures on the Bible.* 9d.

MR. VERNON LUSHINGTON — *Shakespeare.* 3d.

MR. F. HARRISON — *Politics and Human Religion.* 2d.

We are at present preparing a work in which we propose to collect in a single volume of about 600 pp. crown 8vo, short but careful biographies of every one of the 558 great

men whose names are found in the Positivist Calendar. The book will be preceded by a general introduction, and will form, when complete, a compendious dictionary of biographies, selected from the most representative names in all ages and in every department of greatness. The New Calendar of Great Men will be the combined work of many contributors, Mr. Frederic Harrison acting as Editor.¹

III. The Positivist Society, an association for the discussion of public affairs, consisting of men duly nominated and elected into the body, which has been in existence for eighteen years, has met regularly in Newton Hall, under the presidency of Professor Beesly.

It has from time to time continued to discuss public questions both of home and foreign policy as they arise. The President has drawn up and signed on behalf of the Society the following statements. The first, on the 13th February, on "Retirement from the Soudan," in which the policy was urged to avoid opening a fresh series of wanton encounters in the African desert. On the 27th of March, an appeal was made, in reference to the Russian advance on Afghanistan, to protect India from external conquest. Lastly, on the occasion of the suppression of a Socialist meeting by the Police, the Society put out a plea, on the 27th of September, in favour of the full right of a peaceable meeting to express opinions not in themselves criminal.

With regard to foreign policy, it has been the aim of our Society, to insist on those principles of international morality which are worked out in detail in the volume on "International Policy," recently republished. At a time when the European Powers are systematically aiming at the extension of their colonial possessions, and when public opinion in England is being appealed to in support of Imperial aggrandisement, it

¹ Published in 1892, and in constant issue.

has been our unanimous resolve to insist on a policy of peace and justice. The story of the constant wars and the perpetual pressure by which the Empire is extended in all parts of the earth is one which in our eyes adds neither honour nor security to our nation. The cause of true civilisation gains neither at home nor in the scene of these new acquisitions. The native races are crushed or demoralised, our rivals are perpetually irritated, and our home civilisation is disturbed by a system of aggrandisement which is justified by no superior morality, and which stimulates amongst ourselves the pride of race and the desire of wealth. In Africa, in Asia, in Polynesia alike, we earnestly raise our voice against a policy of aggrandisement and of trans-marine dominion, which makes more distant the harmony of the West and true industrial progress, and substitutes one of the worst types of war, irregular commercial conquest, for the civilising influence of the stronger over the weaker races of the world. We can only at this moment renew the appeal that we made to the Government when it entered on the system of armed intervention in Egyptian politics; and we again urge that the permanent occupation of the valley of the Nile by an English army will involve a series of rebellions amongst the native races of Africa, and prove a continual menace to the peace of Europe.

We emphatically repudiate the policy which, without any consent on the part of the nation, and with all information as to what had been done and what was being done rigidly suppressed, has made a new conquest in the East of Upper Burmah, and has added to our overburdened Indian Empire an immense and undefined territory. The real object of this adventure has been to secure a country coveted by traders; and the usual occasion for it has been easily found in the quarrels between adventurous dealers and the native governments into whose dominions they incessantly thrust them-

selves. We can find no real gain either to the true honour or the safety of our people in this act of military aggression; which, by burdening us with a vast and unknown kingdom to organise, and by advancing the limits of our Eastern Empire to neighbourhood both with the Chinese Empire and with the possessions of France, opens to us the prospect of fresh entanglements and new responsibilities.

We observe with much satisfaction that the appeal we made in our last Report to unity and combination of efforts around the only possible centre of action, that in Paris, has been followed by, or has coincided with, a marked cessation of the agitating questions which for some years have hampered Positivist action. We are rejoiced to find ourselves in sympathy with all groups of Positivists in the West: the points of difference as to the mode of presenting the doctrine of the Master, and as to the opportuneness of attempting to fill up the whole of his ideal being such only as may naturally occur in a healthy, free and growing movement.

The Positivist Library, the selection of Books made in 1851 by Auguste Comte, "to guide," as he says, "the more thoughtful minds amongst the people in their choice of books for constant use," is now almost entirely complete. The bulk of the collection was the gift of Mr. Kaines, and the only volumes still wanting are a few text-books and scientific works not now in ordinary use. We appeal to our friends to contribute copies of these when they can be met with, and also duplicate copies of the works of Comte, and other books most in demand. We have added a considerable number of copies of the English translation of the Positive Polity.

The volumes now collected can be referred to and borrowed on application to the Librarian, Mr. Higginson, at Newton Hall. The use of the Library, as well as admission to all lectures and classes, is free.

It is one of the cardinal principles of the Positive movement to make all religious or scientific teaching gratuitous, to offer education freely to any who choose to accept it, and to relieve the teacher himself from every consideration of self-interest. The aim of Positivist principles is to substitute social for personal motives throughout the entire sphere of education, and ultimately of life altogether.

It is obvious that this cannot be effected without the aid in time and in money of those who accept that principle. The Committee appeal to all interested in popular education on a Positive basis to give them such aid according to their power. And they would feel encouraged if those who attend the courses in the Hall felt disposed to make known the measure of their sympathy with those who have founded and support it, or would aid their efforts in such ways as they deem possible and right.

In the Report dated the 1st of March 1881, we announced the re-issue at a cheap price of the *General View of Positivism*, being the translation, by Dr. Bridges, of the introduction to the Positive Polity of Auguste Comte. The sale of this has been most satisfactory; and we believe that those who desire to get a general knowledge of the system of Auguste Comte will acquire it most readily by studying this admirable review of his whole philosophical, social, and religious work. (W. Reeves: crown octavo, pp. 295, price 2s. 6d.)

The purpose of the various funds is as follows:—The first is the Central Positivist Fund, of which the Treasurer is Dr. Robinet, 14 Rue Mayet, Paris. The object of this fund is to organise a spiritual communion of believers in the Religion of Humanity. At present it serves to maintain the rooms of Auguste Comte in No. 10 Rue Monsieur-le-Prince, Paris, where the meetings and discourses of the Paris body are held; the payment of a pension of £24 a-year, left by

Comte to his adopted daughter and her son; and, lastly, a sum of £240 a-year for the support of M. Laffitte, whose entire energies are devoted to the Positivist work. We look on the maintenance of these objects as a sacred duty involved in any practical acceptance of Positivist belief.

The second fund is that for the general purposes of the London Committee, for the rent and incidental expenses of the Hall where lectures are given, and for printing, and advertising for the lectures and meetings.

The third fund is for the publication of works of Comte, and other Positivist writings. The whole of the profits arising from any publication of the Committee go to the publishing fund for the extension of the movement.

The *Revue Occidentale*, the organ of Positivism, edited under the direction of M. Pierre Laffitte, appears every two months in Paris.

In concluding this Report, we desire to say that, whilst we disclaim any pretension to direct our fellow-Positivists, we shall always be ready at any time to give any explanations or suggestions that may be asked of us, to supply any information about our action or system, and to put any one who desires it in communication with the central Direction.

FREDERIC HARRISON (*President*).

J. H. BRIDGES.

E. S. BEESLY.

J. COTTER MORISON.

VERNON LUSHINGTON.

ALFRED COCK.

B. FOSSETT LOCK (*Secretary*).

1 *January*, 1886.

1 *Moses*, 98

{ NEWTON HALL,

{ Fleur-de-lis Court, Fetter Lane, E. C.

XVII

VALEDICTORY

1902

TWENTY-ONE YEARS AT NEWTON HALL

Valedictory Address given March 2, 1902

THE meeting of to-night will be the last public gathering that our Society will hold in this Hall, before removing to its new seat, No. 10 Clifford's Inn; and it will be useful to pass in review the various attempts which have been made to develop the principles of Positivism during the twenty-one years of our tenancy here. We are compelled to leave a place which has many associations for us, by the fact that the ground landlords, the Royal Scottish Corporation, require for their own purposes the fine old eighteenth century Hall which we restored and adorned in 1881; and we have secured an equally suitable lodging in the historic buildings of Clifford's Inn, hard by, once a famous Inn of Chancery, which dates back to the fourteenth century of Old London.

This Hall was opened on May 1, 1881, by Pierre Laffitte, the successor of Auguste Comte and Director of Positivism, who came over for the purpose from Paris, and gave in French three addresses on successive Sundays on the Religion of Humanity, and two more on the rise of Sociology and Moral Science, which were heard by large audiences of our own friends, as well as of the public. Pierre Laffitte, now in his

eightieth year, still lives in Paris, whither he came from the Garonne in 1839, and has been Director of Positivism, and in almost continued activity, since the death of Comte, in 1857, for nearly forty-five years. Two of the discourses that he gave were, on the occasion, one on the *Presentation* of infants, and another on the *Admission* of an adult member of our body — ceremonies that Comte proposed, without any mystical character or objective efficacy, to correspond the first with the Baptism of infants, on being “presented” as new members of the community, and dedicated publicly to its service, — the second, answering to our “coming of age,” or entrance on adult responsibility as full members of the common life.

The regular Sunday addresses were begun on May 22, after the return home of M. Laffitte, when I spoke of the nature of our movement, of the debt we owed to our Director in France, and the importance of the Occidental character of the Positivist synthesis. We may rest assured that any spiritual or moral movement whatever which limits itself to national bounds has no vitality or elevation in it. The thought, the science, the moral standards of our age are not national, but Western, that is, common to the advanced nations of the West, which for these purposes form one nation. Political, economic, and practical relations are local and national, limited by language, race, institutions, and political divisions. But all the intellectual and spiritual relations of modern civilisation are common to the advanced communities of Europe and America. Hence, a national or local note is fatal to the claims of any high spiritual movement, as we see in the typical example of Protestant and sectarian religion.

The great inspiration of the Religion of Humanity is that it keeps ever in view that universal human ideal, whilst the various local types, habits, and ideas, all healthy in them-

selves, tend to correct and supplement each other. The Gospel only became a world-wide power when it ceased to be Jewish and was preached to the Gentiles throughout the Roman world. The religion of the Middle Ages was Catholic, *i.e.*, at least in principle, universal. All that was elevated in the New Birth of thought and life in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, all that was humane in the Revolutions of the eighteenth century, was offered to the whole human race, even whilst it had a local or national origin. If Humanity is ever to become the venerated centre of our thoughts and acts, it must be presented to us as a power in which national and local varieties are absorbed and transfigured.

I have spoken of the Positivist movement as a *synthesis*. Both the word and the idea must be made familiar and typical, since this movement consists of several different purposes, of which all must be *combined* in a common harmony; for its special characteristic is the right co-ordination of heterogeneous forces and activities. These essentials are:—

1. An intellectual basis, a body of principles, solidly taught and grouped together, a mass of real scientific knowledge;
2. A system of moral education — a personal training in feeling and in duties, a direct appeal to the nobler emotions;
3. A practical scheme of society and politics, leading to a new future for the commonwealth of nations.

Positivism means, therefore, (*a*) an education in scientific truth, (*b*) a moral discipline in conduct and in worship, and (*c*) a political programme or movement. It is impossible to limit it to any one, or any two, of these. All are characteristic and essential. And the efficacy of any one side depends on its being stimulated, regulated, and harmonised with the other two.

For these reasons, Positivism cannot be compared with any of the current types of religion, or of social organisation,

or of scientific education. How compare with Christianity, either Catholic or Protestant, a religious movement which is just as earnest about the international relations of States, and also about the true classification of the sciences, as it is about any creed or any worship, to say nothing of its fixing the idea of religion on that which belongs to Man, to Demonstration, and to this Earth on which we live? How compare with any of the philosophies, metaphysical, or materialist, a movement which is far more keen to study the progress towards culture and comfort for the working-classes, than it is keen about the origin of species or the geometry of four dimensions? And yet again, how compare with any of the socialisms or social utopias of this age a Socialism (as, in one sense, Positivism undoubtedly is) which seeks to base the Future on a scientific study of the Past, which looks to the moralisation of Capital, not its communalisation, by means of a common religion, and the organised influence of a body of moral and intellectual leaders?

How is it possible to compare Positivism with any theological religion, with any known philosophy, with any modern Socialism? Yet it is a Religion, it is a Philosophy, it is a Socialism. None of the three can be dispensed with, or forgotten, or even adjourned. All are alike important: all must be co-ordinated. For Positivism is an effort to bring about the *synthesis*, *i.e.* the harmonious and organic ordering of modern civilisation as a whole to a common result. Its mission is to raise to one common plan the reorganisation of the intellectual world and its systematic education, the purification of man's moral life, the re-settlement of society on just and happy terms. That plan in brief is the inspiration of all human activities — be they of science, of morality, of society — by the sense of man's duty to Humanity, man's understanding of Humanity and the world in which he finds

his existence to be destined, and finally by man's dependence on Humanity, and the reverence and awe with which he must regard this Providence.

RELIGIOUS CELEBRATIONS

Meetings and addresses have been continued regularly on Sundays throughout the year, except during the summer months, when out-door pilgrimages and visits to distant places were substituted for meetings in the Hall. There has been no regular attempt to institute any formal ritual, and no invocations answering to the litanies of theology have ever been used by us. From time to time, the leading ideas of the Positivist faith have been embodied in specific maxims; the reading of selected passages from masterpieces of poetry and prose has been frequent; and a choir has been trained to sing with organ accompaniment selected sets of hymns, anthems, and songs, exclusively idealising the human conception of religious emotion. But the essential purpose of these Sunday gatherings has been to promote a systematic understanding of the history and course of human civilisation, to awaken the sense of man's dependence on Humanity, his duties towards Humanity, and to stimulate the study of the moral and material conditions of man's being on earth. These meetings and addresses have had a religious character in that they have been designed to deepen our understanding of human nature, of personal and social duty, and to kindle the sense of devotion to all forms of human duty. We have not sought to give them the character of adoration by way of set formularies, nor have we spoken of them as *services* in any special sense — other than what we understand as the *service of Man*.

We have never prejudged the question as to how far the future may succeed in adapting the invocations and the effu-

sions familiar to modern Christianity to the honour of an ideal assemblage of human beings, living, dead, and unborn, and (presumably) without any collective personality or consciousness — for this is what Humanity represents to us. It seems to us premature to attempt any such adaptation — even if it were practicable. We have never tested the problem. On the one hand it seems unscientific to invoke that which is not believed to be reciprocally conscious. On the other hand, poetry, rhetoric, and all emotion are habitually prone to attribute feeling to moral and even to material organisms. The ancients endowed with life their tribe, their founding, their State, their society. Israel, Rome, the Church, the Republic, the Revolution, the Future, have led men to death, self-devotion, and fervid apostrophes. And it is reasonable that Humanity, which is infinitely greater and absorbs all these, may in a regenerated society do the same. But for ourselves we have not ventured to suggest a ritual or direct cult of that sort.

Devotional expression on the model of modern rituals has always seemed to us wholly insufficient to represent the *worship* of the future as conceived by Auguste Comte, by which we understand the collective commemoration of all that is wise, beneficent, beautiful, and creative in the history and endowments of Man. Indeed, the repetition of pre-arranged forms of expression and the utterance of invocations, is a totally different thing from the habitual cultivation of heart, of character, and of imagination, to which Comte applied the untranslatable term of *Culte*. Mere imitations of the formularies and devotional symbols of Monotheism could only retard the rise of social and artistic worship in a healthy and ample form. And it has often tended to mislead others by withdrawing their attention from the scientific and practical character of the Positivist system.

The Sunday discourses have dealt with the history of the past, the public and social duties of citizens, and the philosophical and religious truths on which the harmony of personal and social life depends. For history, Professor Beesly in the twenty years has delivered a series of lectures, in a succession of epochs, covering the entire period from the dawn of civilisation to the nineteenth century. The late J. Cotter Morison, Dr. Bridges, Mr. Vernon Lushington, Mr. Swinny, Mr. Marvin, the late Mr. Charles Fyffe, and myself, have treated, in systematic courses, various epochs of ancient and modern history. In Sociology, the principles of Positivist Ethics, Social Economics, the theory of Politics, of Industry, of International Comity, have been constantly presented in a series of lectures. The maxims, education, worship, and ideals of the human faith have been also expounded and developed. And the moral and social problems involved in the crucial questions of the day, apart from any question of party, have been continually insisted on from the standpoint of a systematic scheme of political and social reorganisation.

COMMEMORATIONS

One of the most typical modes of what Auguste Comte understood by the term *Culte* is the commemoration of the great servants of Humanity, and the due exposition of their lives and achievements. This is a great amplification of the useful but very narrow institution of the Church — the celebration of the lives of Saints and Martyrs. New Year's Day (the Day of Humanity), New Year's Eve (the Day of All the Dead), and the anniversary of the death of Comte (September 5), have been regularly observed in this Hall by appropriate meetings, chants, and discourses. The centenaries, or secular anniversaries of the great men specially

marked in the Positivist Calendar have been constantly observed as these occasions came round. The year 1881, corresponding to the year 1300 in the Musulman era, was the occasion of a review of the character and work of Mahomet, who represents, as do Buddha, Confucius, and Numa, one type of theocratic civilisation, in company with Moses in the historical calendar. The millenary of Alfred, the great Saxon hero, was specially celebrated in 1901; and it had been proposed many years earlier in the pilgrimage we made to Winchester in 1890. Other centenaries observed were those of William the Silent, Cromwell, Frederick II., Washington, the French Revolution, Calderon, Corneille, Burns, Gutenberg, Diderot, Condorcet, John Hunter, Comte, — Raffaele, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven — the musicians being commemorated by vocal and instrumental performance of some of their principal works, as was also the case for the songs of Shakespeare and of Burns. Other musical commemorations were those of Bach and the founders of modern music, and on the Day of the Dead, 1883, was presented the typical poem of George Eliot, "Oh, may I join the choir invisible," as a cantata for voices and stringed instruments.

PILGRIMAGES

During the summer months it has been our custom to visit the tombs, homes, or birthplaces of great men, historic buildings, the national museums, picture galleries, and there to hold lectures on the history of men, places, art, science, and literature. In some cases these visits have extended over several days, as did those made to Paris, Oxford, Cambridge, and Stratford-on-Avon. Others were to Canterbury, Winchester, Ely, St. Alban's, Hampton Court, Chalfont, Jordans, Rolls, Hampstead, Laver, Highgate, Dawn. The public

galleries of all kinds: the Museums, the Tower, the Temple, Westminster Hall, and other ancient buildings of London, have been systematically studied by means of courses of lectures given on the spot. On the anniversary of the death of Comte, when our Parisian colleagues visit Père la Chaise, it has been our annual practice to visit the tombs and monuments of great men in Westminster Abbey, and to precede this visit by an historical lecture, for which facilities have been afforded by the Dean and Chapter. Such collections as those of the British Museum, the South Kensington, and Natural History Museum, the National Gallery, the Tate Gallery, and the National Portrait Gallery, have usually been taken in periods or sections specially selected, and the party conducted by a competent student of the subject chosen.

Pilgrimages of the kind were originally a French institution, mainly promoted by Pierre Laffitte; and we have been glad to see that the practice has widely spread amongst educational and religious bodies here. They afford an occasion for combining historical and artistic instruction with the spirit of reverential gratitude that we are bound to cultivate towards the great men and the memorable heroisms of the past. They are at once education and religion — in the sense in which religion is understood in this place. When we stand beside the birthplace of Shakespeare or of Cromwell, or at the tomb of Milton or Newton, the *genius loci* colours with a new emotion the interest that may be kindled as we study in a lecture-room their works or their deeds. And days spent in visits to the spots made sacred by great memories — whether in Paris, in Oxford, Cambridge, or Stratford — may teach more than the perusing of academic text-books. Amongst those whose services to mankind have thus been recorded in presence of their actual dust, or of the homes in which they lived, on the spots with which they are associated, we may

mention the names of Shakespeare, Milton, Chaucer, Bunyan, De Foe, Goldsmith, Fielding, Richardson, Alfred, Saint Louis, Jeanne Darc, Becket, Roger Bacon, Francis Bacon, Sir Thomas More, Sir W. Raleigh, Locke, Penn, Cromwell, William the Third, Bradley, Harvey, Halley, Newton, Darwin. It is one great object of the Positivist scheme, regarded from the point of view of worship, to hold up to honour the great men of the Past, of all races, ages, and spheres of duty, and to recall to men of the Present their immortal services to Humanity. To deepen the memory of all we owe to the great Dead, and to remind us of our public duty to the Living, and to our descendants in the Future, is the essence of a human religion — not the repetition of formulas or the celebration of some outward act of devotion.

SACRAMENTS

As I have said, Pierre Laffitte, on his first visit, performed two of those simple rites to which Auguste Comte gave the name of *Sacraments*, a Latin word which the Church borrowed from the practice of the Roman military service, originally meaning the public *oath* which the legionary took in camp to be faithful to his commander and his standard: a name and a practice which the faith of Humanity will borrow from the Church and from Rome, compounding in one ceremony the religious with the social meaning of this venerable term. We regard these rites as simple modes of recalling to the mind of the person interested, and also of the community present, the connection between the great turning-points in our personal life and the duties of our social life in Humanity at large. It is usual to give some public expression to many of the important epochs of daily life, of which Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, the Coronation of a sovereign,

and Burial, still retain in Christendom a religious character. Rejecting the narrow and supernatural formulism of Protestants, which limits the notion of *Sacrament* to Baptism and the Eucharist, the religion of Humanity seeks to invest with a public ceremony, at once social and religious, each of the great events in human life.

We have accordingly frequently held such public celebrations in this Hall, as the infants of our body were brought by their parents and sponsors to be *presented* as new members of the community, as young persons of both sexes were *confirmed* upon entering on their systematic education, on *admission* to the duties of manhood on coming of age, on *destination*, or formal profession of a public career (and with us, all useful "professions" are public careers), again on *marriage*, consequent on the civil ceremony by the public Registrar, and finally, on the *burial* or memorial service of the dead. Most of the addresses given on these occasions are here published; and it will be seen from their nature and tone that, whilst there is nothing in these ceremonies that is not at once practical and scientific, they must tend to strengthen the moral character and give a new religious meaning to the critical epochs of our daily life.

SCIENTIFIC EDUCATION

It has been earnestly impressed on us by M. Laffitte that the very existence of Positivism as a scientific system of belief depends on the institution of a complete course of education in real knowledge and the formation of an adequate body of competent teachers. The idle taunt of satirists that Positivists are indifferent to science or, in any sense, obscurantist, is the contrary to the truth. Rather, on Positive principles, there is no road to stable religious convictions

except by the way of knowledge of real things; and there is no royal road to real knowledge other than the teaching of competent instructors and the systematic study of science in the widest sense. Accordingly, it was our main purpose in opening Newton Hall to offer free popular training in the essential elements of scientific knowledge, understanding the term *science* to include Sociology and Morals. Our plan was but one of the many attempts of our time to found a People's School. It differed from almost all of these in the following things:—

1. It was on principle strictly free: no teacher being paid, and no fee being received from those who came to learn.

2. The education aimed at, not being either professional or literary, was to be essentially *systematic*, avoiding all desultory and miscellaneous information. It was based on the scheme of scientific training laid down by Comte as the ideal of the future.

3. Whilst rejecting every theological and metaphysical element, the entire course of study was inspired by a *religious*, that is, a social purpose, as enabling us to effect our due service to the cause of Humanity, by understanding the laws which regulate the world and our own material and moral being.

In accordance with that scheme we have worked for twenty-one years, beginning with various courses on the elements and early history of Geometry; thence proceeding to Astronomy; the Elements and early history of Physical Chemistry; the history and present state of Chemistry, and the general history and fundamental conclusions of physical science. These have been treated in successive courses by professional students of science, such as Mr. Percy Harding, Mr. Fossett Lock, Mr. Vernon Lushington, Dr. Bridges, Dr. Senier, and Mr. H. Gordon Jones. Biology, human and general, has

been treated in several courses by Dr. T. Fitzpatrick, Dr. Bridges, and Dr. Higginson. Sociology, both historical and statical, has been continuously taught by Professor Beesly, Dr. Bridges, Mr. Cotter Morison, Mr. Vernon Lushington, Dr. Higginson, Dr. Joseph Kaines, Mr. Swinny, Mr. Marvin, and myself. Along with these systematic courses in the sciences, various classes have been held for the study of French, of Drawing, of Music, and the reading of the works of Comte. It has been one of the cardinal principles of the Positivist movement to make all religious or scientific teaching gratuitous, to offer education freely to all who choose to accept it, and to relieve the teacher from every consideration of self-interest. The whole aim of Positivist principle is to substitute social for personal motives throughout the entire sphere of education, and ultimately throughout the whole of life.

THE LIBRARY

In connection with the curriculum of scientific instruction, we proceeded to collect copies of the works which Comte proposed in 1851 as the "Positivist Library for the nineteenth century." The aim was to show in a concrete form the nature of the encyclopædic education which he propounded, and to introduce more systematic habits of reading. It was a select catalogue of books of permanent value of a general kind for constant use, containing, in four sections, works of imagination, science, history, and religion. It embraces 270 distinct compositions by about 140 authors, and was designed "to check the moral and intellectual evils which result from desultory reading." It was avowedly provisional and popular, addressed to the general public, not to specialists or professional students, and was certainly in no sense ex-

clusive or final. The whole collection has now been gathered in the Hall, almost wholly the gift of our enthusiastic colleague, the late Dr. Joseph Kaines. Entirely recognising the provisional and suggestive character of the library, we have opened it to all comers for free use, whilst keeping it distinct from the more general collection of works in current circulation, which has also been made.

PUBLICATIONS

The most important publication of our body, the translation in four volumes, octavo, of the *Positive Polity* of Comte, was completed a few years before the nomination of our Committee; but we acquired twenty copies of the entire work, and have duly distributed them. The second edition of Dr. Bridges' translation of the *General View* in a popular form has had a large and continuous sale. In 1892 we issued the *New Calendar of Great Men*, on which we had been occupied for some years, being biographies of 558 worthies of all ages and nations whose names are arranged in the "Positivist Calendar." Of this work some 2000 copies have been sold, and the sale still continues. We have also had on sale the second edition of our collective work, *International Policy*, which Dr. Congreve edited in 1866, and which Dr. Blake republished in 1884. Other works have been Dr. Bridges' *Discourses on Religion*, and *on the Bible*; the *Positivist Library* and other essays and addresses by myself; translations of M. Laffitte's *Chinese Civilisation*; Condorcet's *Arithmetic*; the collection entitled *Positivist Comments on Public Affairs*; and the *Positivist Hymn-Book*, selected and arranged by Mrs. Frederic Harrison. The separate lectures and pamphlets, all issued at, or under, cost price, are too numerous to mention. These have been now, to a

great degree, superseded by the regular issue of the monthly *Review*, founded by Professor Beesly in 1893, and edited by him down to the current, or tenth year since its foundation. *The Positivist Review* now takes the place of the separate essays and discourses, and contains the record of all that is undertaken in this Hall, and comments on current events.

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S GUILDS

In connection with the classes at Newton Hall there have been formed Guilds, the one of young men, the other of young women, engaged in daily occupations, for the purpose of mutual improvement and general instruction. The Guild of Men was directed by Mr. Swinny and Mr. Marvin, that of the Women by Mrs. Frederic Harrison, Mrs. Draper, and other ladies. The classes held were in history, mathematics, biology, French, drawing, singing, musical drill, and dramatic reading — partly separate and partly combined from both Guilds. Along with the Guilds have been clubs for games, indoors as well as athletic, and associations for holiday trips, dramatic entertainments, and social tea parties. Social evenings, open to all friends, have been held in the Hall monthly during the autumn and winter sessions.

POLITICAL ACTION

The social and practical questions of our time must necessarily occupy a continual place in a movement which aims at introducing a working system of social life. To organise and express such judgment has been the task of the "Positivist Society," strictly so-called, which has met continuously under the Presidency of Professor Beesly since 1879, and, since May last, under that of Mr. Swinny. It is a political association, founded in 1867, consisting of members formally

enrolled, which seeks by debates and public manifestoes to insist on those moral and social doctrines which Positivists assert in general politics. These are the supremacy of moral considerations over those of national interest and pride; the substitution of the welfare of the people for any class interest or hereditary privilege and a scrupulous respect for the national integrity of every national unit, however weak and uncivilised.

The principles we have consistently maintained are those worked out in detail in the volume of collected essays called *International Policy*. At a time when the European Powers are bent on the extension of their colonial possessions, when public opinion in England is being goaded into a course of imperial aggrandisement, we have constantly appealed to our countrymen to listen to the voice of Justice, Magnanimity, and Peace. The cause of true civilisation gains neither at home nor in the scene of these new acquisitions, which are no longer true or possible *colonies* but mere *plantations* worked by coloured "hands." The natives are crushed or demoralised, our trade rivals are perpetually irritated into competition, and our home civilisation is disturbed by a system of aggrandisement which is not justified by any superior morality, and which stimulates amongst ourselves the pride of race and the desire of wealth. It adjourns to a more distant future the harmony of the Western Powers and true industrial progress, and substitutes one of the worst types of war, irregular commercial conquest, for the civilising influence of the stronger over the weaker races of the world. The *Positivist Comments*, collected in 1892, contain the incessant protests we have made against such acts of aggression as the first Transvaal annexation of 1881, the occupation of Egypt, and the successive expeditions and conquests up the Nile, against the Irish Coercion Bills of 1881 and 1887,

against the occupation of Tunis by France, and against continued aggression upon China. The Society also treated such questions as Municipal Government, Parliamentary Oaths and Blasphemous Libel, Socialism and Industrial Re-organisation, Pauperism, and Local Government. Since the establishment of the *Review* in 1893, it has been found to be the most suitable organ for the expression of opinion on such subjects as the recent wars in Zululand, Rhodesia, in West Africa, in China, and in the South African Republics.

GENERAL SUMMARY

In our first Report we said that it was intended to make Newton Hall a place of meeting for religious communion, for systematic instruction, and for the formation of opinion on social and political questions. It was to be at once — Chapel, School, and Club. And such it has been for twenty-one years. It has not been a place to repeat set invocations, but rather to develop the sense of Reverence and Affection towards whatever is great and good for man. It has not been an academic class-room, but rather a place for inspiring the love of sound knowledge with a view to a right life. Positivism is equally a Philosophy and a Polity, its aim being to co-ordinate our ideas as well as our conduct — having at once a Doctrine, a Practice, and a Worship. We have endeavoured to *suggest*, rather than to *show*, what might be the germ of a really human, truly social, and strictly scientific Religion — *i.e.* an enthusiastic devotion to our human duties, in the spirit of self-sacrifice, faith, love, and hope.

Is it not idle to trouble ourselves about the question — whether or not we have succeeded? Those who do anything organic, who leave anything fruitful behind them, seldom seem at the moment to succeed. That which has a great and

sudden popularity in these days is almost inevitably shallow, specious, and transient. The very conditions of rapid success in our age of journalistic megalomania are first — to promise some immediate good, and secondly — to be vague and indefinite. If you cannot offer instant relief of ills, as the patentees of cures do, or if you put your proposals in plain intelligible form — then people in this age of neurotic eagerness to be rich, powerful, or happy straight off, in this generation of criticism and metaphysics — turn away and listen to the sweeping utopias of Socialism and Cosmic Ethics, or the lunatic drivel of Christian Science.

The progress of the Positivist Synthesis as a whole has been quite adequate to meet all reasonable expectation from experience, when we consider what it is and what it has undertaken. Positivism is a vast ideal for reorganising the whole intellectual, social, political, and religious world on a definite, coherent, and scientific scheme. It has been fairly before the world for not more than forty-five years. Auguste Comte lived and died in Paris, an obscure teacher of mathematics, a solitary thinker, with no more than a few friends and followers, in a life of extreme seclusion and poverty. He is now recognised in France as that which Gambetta publicly described him, “the greatest thinker of the nineteenth century.” Organised bodies of his followers exist in all civilised countries, and they publish regular organs devoted to their principles and their doings in England, in France, in Germany, in Italy, in Mexico, in Brazil. The Ministers of the Republic have agreed to unveil the monument which has been erected in Paris by a great body of men eminent in science, politics, and philosophy, of all nations and every profession, who have given their support to this honour of a man, in his lifetime an outcast from all academic and literary societies.

Let us ask ourselves frankly, What was the condition of Christianity in the lifetime of those who could remember its Founder, or what was the following of Descartes, of Bacon, or of Hume, in the generation which succeeded theirs? Was it even as great as that of Comte to-day? I recognise in Herbert Spencer, the venerable *doyen* of English philosophy, far the most potent thinker in the English tongue now living. Is his personal following to-day greater than that of Comte, if we take account of the whole world of thought in the East and in the West? Philosophers, indeed, plant a precious acorn here and there, which needs generations to grow into a sturdy oak. The thoughtless herd want to see heaps of acorns ready for immediate eating, and they overlook the acorn fructifying in the ground.

We have never sought to found a "sect." Nor do we run about to "save souls," or desire any sudden "conversions" or accessions in the mass. It takes years to master the full meaning of the Positivist scheme as a whole: and as many more before it can become a familiar rule of practical life. And, for the present, I think it needs a special combination of moral and intellectual habits before it can be assimilated as the natural growth of a man's thought and action. Hence it is not necessary, perhaps it is not desirable, that the people should come in their thousands, as if it were the Gospel in the days of the Apostles or the Salvation Army to-day. The range of the Positive Synthesis is so vast, embracing Philosophy, the Sciences, moral conduct, education, economics, politics, ritual, worship — that what attracts one mind, one nature, drives off another. The progress of any synthesis is necessarily slow, for it aims at harmonising ideas real and tendencies which in an analytic and combative age are radically opposed.

We have fallen, we well know, on an age peculiarly anti-

pathetic to almost every belief we profess, to every tendency we hope to develop, and yet an age prone to foster every tendency we seek to curb. Positivism is above all things a Synthesis, and insists on a synthetic, that is, a systematic treatment of every problem. And this is an age of microscopic research, of intolerant analysis, and dispersive specialism. Positivism is the realm of positive knowledge, and the fashionable philosophising of our day tends towards cloudy hypotheses, and hysterical imaginings about things of which the human mind can arrive at no real knowledge, whilst it can at will make sublime guesses. Positivism looks forward to *Sociocracy* — *i.e.* a society wherein the true interests of the whole shall be always the paramount end. The spirit of modern politics, even of modern Toryism (perhaps we ought to say, especially of modern Toryism) is to pay regard to *Democracy*, *i.e.* the absolute authority of the current majority from day to day, as expressed in the ballot-box.

Positivism rests on Order and Progress. The tendency of our time is to oscillate between Reaction and Revolution. Positivism looks forward to a slow, gradual, but permanent organisation of Industry, by the moralisation of Capital, under the influence of a new social morality and a really human Religion. But the dream of the workers to-day is towards a class war, the forcible capture of Capital, the summary expropriation of wealth by the poor — without any new morality or religion at all — to end, of course, in terrorism and chaos. The Positivist millennium is one of Peace, Industry, and international Comity. The Utopia of this age is one of Empire, Conquest, Aggression, the exploitation of the weaker races by the strong, the rivalry for predominance and glory. Ever since the age of Napoleon III. and Bismarck the peoples have been dazzled with dreams of conquest, and intoxicated with the passions of war.

For thirty years we have called aloud to our countrymen, in season and out of season, to awaken out of this debauch, to reject the perilous seductions of aristocratic and plutocratic demagogues. Our voices have been raised against the dismemberment and extortion of China, against Afghan wars, Soudan wars, the seizure of Eyypt, against South African wars, against the systematic coercion of Ireland. For more than a generation the set of public opinion has been fiercely the other way. The demagogues of party and their parasites in the press treat that fact as decisive of right or wrong.

We are by principle republicans; and the set of to-day is again towards Monarchy. We look for a religion of Humanity; and the thought of our time tends towards a more and more transcendental (and, therefore, more impotent) theology. These cheers for royalty are too often little but cries for a more florid Reaction; and these invocations to Heaven are inspired by thirst for victory and dominion. For nearly three years we have protested against the war on the South African Republics — a war which has blackened the name of England in the civilised world, has destroyed our self-respect as a just and generous people, has undermined the traditions of British freedom and constitutional law, and has imposed on the generations to come an inheritance of shame and disaster.

The aristocracy which has long maintained, at any rate in England, a limited, free, and generous monarchy, chose to hand over the conduct of imperial affairs to the adepts in trade competition and the sharp practice of the market; they concealed the corruption with which various branches of administration were found to be honeycombed, and threw dust in the eyes of Parliament and the country; they urged the mob to vent their vulgar insults on a gallant foe and to display an even more vulgar exultation over petty triumphs; they

deliberately pursued a barbarous system of warfare such as causes scandal in the civilised world, and breaks the accepted customs of public law; they tear up the most cherished titles of English liberty under the law, outlaw a nation, and claim arbitrary despotism at their own will. We see the future loaded with a terrible retribution to that order which has begun so violent a revolution — not only in South Africa, but here at home. Our descendants will look back with bitter memories on this age; and an Empire so built up with foundations of wrong, and cemented by blood, may hereafter dissolve more rapidly than it rose.

We have done our part. We have spoken out plainly in the face of the world. We have no party interests here. We seek no office, no authority, no seat. We are as warmly patriotic as any men. We love our Country, the very name of which stands on these walls beside the sacred names of Family and of Humanity. We desire to add to its glory, its honour, its influence, and its high traditions. But we will not see its glorious history polluted by the intrigues of cosmopolitan buccaneers and aspiring tradesmen “booming” the Empire, as if it were an inflated joint stock company to be manœuvred “for a rise.” The most deplorable incident of our time is the cowardice and servility even of leading men. Politicians cower before popular passion, dumb in presence of national folly and international crimes. Lawyers witness the prostitution of justice without a murmur. Soldiers suffer themselves to be made the jailers of women and children, carry on war in a mode which involves a horrible mortality of infants, turn whole provinces into a wilderness, burn the homes of its peaceable inhabitants, and seize and sentence whom they please in the teeth of all the traditions of English law. It is a warning as to the consequences of Democracy, pure and simple, when we see how the People can be bam-

boozled by official falsehood, stuffed with calumnies, misled by hired scribes, made tipsy with swagger and rowdyism — purposely stimulated for party ends — and thus made more absolute and dangerous than any Tsar or Sultan, because there is no direct appeal from those who (for the hour) have control of *numbers*, of *force*, and of *official authority*. From a despot there is always the mute judgment of the mass of the people, which only needs a leader and a voice to be irresistible. But, when a huge majority is excited by sham patriotism, hood-winked by those who control the sources of information, seduced daily and hourly by prints which exist only to tickle their ears, and to feed their passions — then there is a democracy more reckless and insolent than the ochlocracy of Athens, on which Cleon played his game, more dangerous to the existence of a free State than the bravoës led by Clodius and Milo at Rome.

When I see how all that we here hold sacred, true, and just, is the very opposite of all that has been in fashion with the multitude and their favourites for these many years past, I do not wonder that our community is so modest, and our name is in so little favour. I wonder rather that we have kept together in the storm, and have made our voices heard in the din. We will hold together. We will listen to the still small voice of truth, justice, honour, and peace, which may yet be heard by those who choose. For my own part, I am well content. I have tried to do what lay in me, since we began the public profession of the Religion of Humanity thirty-two years ago. Every one of my original colleagues of those days, who stood with the late Dr. Congreve, is either gone, or for reasons of health, or on personal grounds has ceased to take active part with us here. All those who work with us now are much my juniors. And with hope and confidence I must leave to them the brunt of the task. I have reached an

age at which I must try to set my own house in order and pick up the loose ends of a somewhat tangled skein. If I go into the country to seek a more quiet life, I shall have to leave more active work to my colleagues here, whilst I seek for a time of more silent thought than it has been my lot to enjoy.

In our new home, and with younger men to direct the movement, we shall go on with the old work. And I trust that they will gather in richer fruits than has been possible in the time of trial and of first experiment that this Hall has witnessed. And, were it my last word, I will not abate from a sure trust that, unless the Spirit of Evil is finally destined on this earth to overcome the Spirit of Good, many generations will not pass ere the lust of Empire shall have given way before the true love of Fatherland, ere rational education shall have replaced the present pedantic specialism, ere republican simplicity shall drive out the serio-comic toadyism of rank, when the mongrel Christianity which dishonours the name of Jesus shall have been finally absorbed in the Religion of Humanity.

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